

MARXISM AND DEMOCRACY

by

Arthur Kiss

Part I of the book deals with the various typical interpretations of democracy, distinguishing among democracy as power of the people, as a form of government, and as indefinite positive value.

After the description of the Marxist-Leninist concept of democracy as a specific form of the exercise of power, the author deals with the problems of its relationship to dictatorship on the one hand and to liberty on the other.

Part II of the volume deals with the criteria of democracy. First, the objective conditions of the emergence of democratic rule are discussed. Then it is shown that any form of democracy—in a direct or indirect way—has a class character and a class basis. This section is concluded with a discussion of the features specific to bourgeois and to socialist democracies.

Part III is devoted to the essential features of the exercise of power under various forms of class democracy. The discussion of the typical methods of the exercise of power in bourgeois democracies includes, among others, political pluralism and the multiparty sys-

tem as well as the major trends in contemporary bourgeois development.

Ample space is devoted in the book to the description of the exercise of power in socialist democracy. The author gives a detailed analysis of its major features: the mass democratic character of socialist democracy, the principle of the mutual subordination of its leaders and the masses, the democratic-centralistic structure of socialist rule and, finally, the role of the Marxist-Leninist Party in the system of socialist democracy.

The book examines the development of bourgeois democracy historically. It gives a detailed analysis of the views of bourgeois theoreticians and of the rich intellectual heritage of Marxism-Leninism. The book also attempts to answer some of the actual problems related to the contemporary development of socialist democracy. In this respect, it is an important contribution to solving some actual theoretical and practical questions of the process of democratization in the socialist countries.

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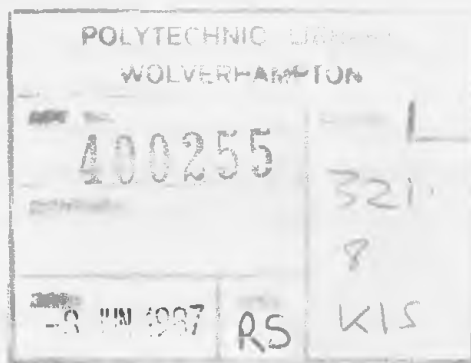
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MARXISM AND DEMOCRACY

A Contribution to the Problems
of the Marxist Interpretation
of Democracy

by
Arthur Kiss

WITHDRAWN



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Contents

Introduction	7
Part One. What Is Democracy?	15
Chapter 1. Three Typical Interpretations of Democracy	19
Chapter 2. The Marxist-Leninist Interpretation of Democracy	36
2.1. The Concept of Democracy	36
2.2. Democracy as a Political Category	43
2.2.1. Democracy is the Expression of the Political Relationships between Classes	44
2.2.2. Democracy is a Specific Form of Political Phenomena . . .	46
2.2.3. Factors Determining Democracy. The Relation of Democ- racy to Metapolitical Relations	51
2.3. Democracy and Dictatorship	61
2.3.1. On Dictatorship	62
2.3.2. On the Relationship between Democracy and Dictatorship .	89
2.4. Democracy and Freedom	101
2.4.1. The Difference between Democracy and Freedom	102
2.4.2. The Contradiction between Democracy and Freedom . . .	107
2.5. Democracy as a Historical Category	119
Part Two. The Criteria of Democracy	125
Chapter 3. On the Conditions and Characteristic Features of Democ- racy	127
3.1. On the Conditions of Democracy	127
3.2. On the "General" Criteria of Democracy	136
3.3. On the People's Rule Character of Democracy	144
Chapter 4. The Essential Criteria of Bourgeois and Socialist Democracy	152
4.1. On the Characteristic Features of Bourgeois Democracy	153
4.2. On the Characteristic Features of Socialist Democracy	159

Part Three. On the Essential Features of the Democratic Exercise of Power	175
Chapter 5. On the Essential Features of the Bourgeois-Democratic Exercise of Power	181
Chapter 6. On the Democratic Exercise of Power in Socialist Society	206
6.1. The Theory and Practice of Mass Democracy	215
6.2. The Unity of Direct and Representative Democracy	255
6.3. The Mutual Subordination of the Leaders and the Governed . .	263
6.4. The Democratic Centralism of the Socialist Power System . . .	283
6.5. The Leading and Exemplary Role of the Communist Party . .	292
6.5.1. The Leading Role of the Party and Democracy	293
6.5.2. The Communist Party — A Model for Socialist and Democratic Self-Government	299
Conclusion	317

Introduction

'Democracy' is one of the most widespread political terms of the twentieth century. There is hardly anyone who would have no opinion about it, who would not have an idea what it should be like, how it should be practiced and developed. S. I. Benn and R. S. Peters wrote in their book *The Principles of Political Thought* that "In 1949, UNESCO sponsored an inquiry into the conflict of ideals associated with the concept of 'democracy'. A questionnaire was sent to scholars of many countries, and ... [the following summary] emerged clearly from their answers: ... 'There were no replies averse to democracy. Probably for the first time in history, "democracy" is claimed as the proper ideal description of all systems of political and social organization...'.¹

However, the fact that the term 'democracy' is so widely spread and acknowledged, does not at all mean that it is also clearly understood. Nowadays there is hardly any other political term that would involve such great theoretical chaos and confusion as the concept of 'democracy' does. As the above-mentioned study has also stated: "The idea of democracy was considered ambiguous and even those who thought that it was clear or capable of clarity were obliged to admit a certain ambiguity either in the institutions or devices employed to effect the idea or in the cultural or historical circumstances by which word, idea, and practice are conditioned."² In this context, S. K. Padover writes as follows in his book *The Meaning of Democracy*: "Two significant phenomena are observable among the new and emerging nations, and even among older, traditionally authoritarian countries. . . . One is that most of them talk democracy and make the claim that theirs is truly a government for 'the people'. . . . This is not merely semantic juggling for purposes of confusion; it is actually a recognition that the common people have claims that cannot be ignored. In other words, nowadays rulers, regardless of their practices, find it necessary to pay tribute to democracy. The other phenomenon, not easily separable from the first, is the widespread ignorance of the meaning of democracy to be found not only among the newer nations but also among some of the older ones. The ignorance

¹ See S. I. Benn and R. S. Peters: *The Principles of Political Thought. Social Foundations of the Democratic State*. Free Press, New York, 1965, p. 394.

² Ibid.

extends both to democratic theory and democratic practice. . . . Some believe that democracy exists where power is concentrated in the hands of a clique in the name of the proletariat. Others are convinced that democracy means rule by a strong leader, provided he represents the people and not some special interest group. Still others, possibly a majority of those who profess faith in democracy, consider it primarily a welfare system. They equate democracy with social welfare, regardless of how it is achieved or maintained.”³

Due to this ambiguity of the term, Z. Bauman states that the concept of ‘democracy’ is a “classical example of the expression of world outlook”,⁴ that is, it definitely expresses emotions, evaluations and class characters. In other words, as it clearly turns out from what Bauman expounds, democracy does not and cannot have any objective grounds that might be unequivocally and adequately determined.

James B. Conant, Professor at Harvard University and former US Ambassador to Bonn, has drawn a completely different conclusion as to the ambiguity of the term ‘democracy’: “Recently there has been so much abuse of the word ‘democracy’, especially since the existence of the iron curtain, that it is perhaps more proper to choose another term instead.”⁵

*

We do not purpose to describe here the various interpretations of the concept of democracy. Instead, we deem it more essential to find out *the grounds of its various interpretations*. Political terms always express concepts which in turn reflect reality. Hence, in the various interpretations of democracy and in the approach to them, it is objectively expressed how the different classes exercise their power, how they govern.

This hypothesis, based on Marxism, is greatly supported by the historical outline of the use of the term ‘democracy’. Expressing the view widely spread in ancient Greece, Plato and Aristotle conceived of democracy as the rule of the poor, of the have-nots. Furthermore, following from this interpretation, Plato—representing the viewpoint of the reactionary aristocracy that was against the poor who were in

³ S. K. Padover: *The Meaning of Democracy. An Appraisal of the American Experience*. F. Praeger Publishers, New York—Washington—London, 1964, pp. 6—7.

⁴ Z. Bauman: *Zarys Marksistowskiej teorii społeczeństwa*. PWN (Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe) 1964.

⁵ J. B. Conant: *Zwei Völker im Gespräch*. Europäische Verlagsanstalt, Frankfurt am Main, 1961, p. 10.

majority—considered democracy to be a rule that would necessarily lead to tyranny, and, starting from this, he refused this form of rule.

Till the end of the eighteenth century the term was rarely used. As J. A. Christophersen writes it, Robespierre and Saint-Just were the first "... after the ancients to use 'democracy' as a positive slogan..."⁶ to denominate by it people's republic. That is why all the opponents of the Jacobinic Dictatorship, moreover, those of the French Revolution, too, definitely refused democracy. Referring to Aristotle, the English conservative thinker E. Burke, who was a fanatical enemy of the French Revolution, writes, for example, as follows: "If I recollect rightly, Aristotle observes, that a democracy has many striking points of resemblance with a tyranny."⁷ Then he continues like this: "Of this I am certain, that in a democracy, the majority of the citizens is capable of exercising the most cruel oppressions upon the minority...; and that oppression of the minority will extend to far greater numbers, and will be carried on with much greater fury, than can almost ever be apprehended from the dominion of a single sceptre. In such a popular persecution, individual sufferers are in a much more deplorable condition than in any other."⁸ Burke's contemporaries, the representatives of the French counter-revolutionary aristocracy, as Joseph de Maistre and M. de Bonald, had an opinion about democracy very much similar to this.⁹

However, it was not only the ideologists of the feudal reactionary forces, prejudiced against the revolution, who refused the idea of democracy. The bourgeoisie, the new class which had just assumed power, also opposed democracy on the grounds that it meant the rule of the have-nots who were in majority. The political efforts of the French, English and American democrats were aimed at expressing that democracy, which was conceived of as people's rule and considered outdated as something peculiarly belonging to ancient times, was indeed viable even under the new circumstances and could mean an alternative form of government dangerous to the exploiting minority even in modern times. That is why it happened that in the early last century, till the thirties—fourties, democracy was judged in political circles in the same way as the

⁶ J. A. Christophersen: *The Meaning of Democracy as Used in European Ideologies*. Universitetsforlaget, Oslo, 1966, pp. 1—2.

⁷ E. Burke: *Reflections on the French Revolution and Other Essays*. J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd., London, 1912, p. 121.

⁸ E. Burke: Op. cit. pp. 121—122.

⁹ See J. A. Christophersen: Op. cit. pp. 32—38.

rule of the hated poor was in Plato's time, the Jacobinic Dictatorship was in the eighteenth century or the dictatorship of the proletariat is in the twentieth century; that is, it had elicited almost similar reactions from the politicians and thinkers of the exploiting class.

Let us give an example. The United States is generally considered to be the new original home of democracy. There is hardly any other country where the term 'democracy' is so widespread, so generally used and so much related to various other phenomena. Still, it is a fact that for a long time—according to S. K. Padover almost till after 1816 (i.e. forty years after the Declaration of Independence!)—both the leading politicians of this society as well as its outstanding ideologists, as Alexander Hamilton and James Madison, refused democracy which they considered to be the unrestrained rule of the majority. As S. K. Padover writes it, "Americans of the latter part of the eighteenth century, including those who created the U. S. Government, believed in self-government but retained skepticism in regard to 'democracy'. To them, self-government meant representative government, a republic, guided by carefully chosen representatives. When they referred to 'democracy,' it was usually as 'pure democracy' or 'pure republic'—meaning unrestrained popular majorities—which they rejected on the traditional ground that it could be nothing but a nursery of chaos."¹⁰ Then Padover describes that the organizations bearing the word 'democratic' were long denounced and persecuted and "It was not until the administration of Monroe and Jackson that 'democracy' and 'democratic' began to enter the political lexicon with a certain measure of public acceptance".¹¹ However, the term was long avoided even after this period. "America's writers and leaders, even those dedicated to the basic ideals of democracy, generally preferred other expressions to convey their meaning. . . . The first outstanding American to employ the term 'democracy' unrestrainedly . . . was Walt Whitman. . . . It took about two generations after Whitman for the word 'democracy' to enter fully into the political vocabulary of the American nation."¹²

Towards the end of the thirties and in the forties of the last century there was a remarkable change in the use of the term 'democracy' in Europe. Namely, the term had become widespread and to be used with a positive political content. In 1849, Guizot, for example, writes as follows: "The existing chaos lies in one word: democracy. Every party

¹⁰ S. K. Padover: *Op. cit.* p. 18.

¹¹ S. K. Padover: *Op. cit.* pp. 19—20 and 21.

¹² S. K. Padover: *Op. cit.* pp. 27—28.

refers to it and tries to own it as a talisman. The monarchists said: our monarchy is a democratic monarchy. . . . The republicans say: the republic is a self-governing democracy. . . . The socialists, the communists and the subversive elements want the republic to be a pure and absolute democracy. . . . The power of the word 'democracy' is so great that no government, no party can imagine to survive without having this word on its banner. . . ."¹³

As it turns out from Guizot's quote, this time the various parties and organizations already used an interpretation of democracy different from the earlier ones. Here, democracy *no longer denotes the rule of the people, of the majority*, but refers to a given *form of governing*.

As this change in the meaning of the term was spreading in the bourgeois political literature, the concept of democracy—which had earlier been refused with hatred—started to become more and more popular. As Padover writes, "Even though democracy was practiced in Periclean Greece 2,500 years ago, and in a few scattered communities thereafter, it has achieved wide recognition only in our own times. The word 'democracy' acquired universal currency only in the twentieth century."¹⁴ Then, he even more precisely defines the date when writing that "In its modern sense, the word 'democracy' is a relative newcomer to the language of politics. Even though it is now in universal use, it has achieved its worldwide popularity only in recent times, specifically, since Woodrow Wilson invoked it in World War I."¹⁵ This specific interpretation of democracy—i.e., restricted to the form of government—is not only a theoretical achievement, but is at the same time also a means of manipulation intended to conceal the essential relations of capitalist rule. That is why it is so very popular and widely spread in both bourgeois political literature and practice.

The real task of scientific research relating to democracy can only be to analyse the actual social content of the various ideas about democracy, to establish how this content is expressed in the different interpretations of democracy, to find the regularities that are reflected in this form, and to discover the function of the various concepts relating to democracy.

Hence, the aim of our book is to reveal the essential content, the class-determined nature, of democracy, and to examine how this determines

¹³ F. P. G. Guizot: *De la Démocratie en France*. Brockhaus — Avenarius, Leipzig, 1849, pp. 9—10.

¹⁴ S. K. Padover: *Op. cit.* p. 8.

¹⁵ S. K. Padover: *Op. cit.* p. 12.

the forms of democratic government. That is, in what power-exercising principles and methods (which either assert themselves necessarily or are to be asserted), in what forms of political institutions and organizations and in what a system of their interrelations this essential content can be expressed.

In dealing with these problems, we have to dwell on such issues as the concept of democracy, its characteristics, the essence of democracy and its manifestations, and finally, the essential forms of democracy.

At a first glance, this study may seem to be unnecessary, since most people have some idea about democracy and express some demand towards its development. In a socialist relation, it follows from two facts; on the one hand, the socialist system educates and activates the people politically, and on the other, the development and spreading of democracy directly affect the everyday life of people, hence, the problems relating to democracy cannot be indifferent for them.

In a few decades, Hungary's society has achieved such a stage of development, at which the historically necessary phase of class oppression—which is an indispensable and surviving form of rule in the exploiting societies—is gradually being replaced (as regards the internal conditions, in an irreversible way) by the co-operation of classes that are forming to become socialist. Consequently, the democratic way of exercising power, which was able to become a characteristic and predominant form in the capitalist societies only a century or more after the bourgeois revolutions and which is almost regularly restricted whenever the class conflicts assume significance, becomes the characteristic and permanent form of exercising political power in the socialist countries within the lapse of time of a generation. The political activity of the working masses and the fact that they 'are for' democracy and insist on its further perfection may and do have a positive effect on the development of socialist democracy and on the strengthening of the phase of exercising power democratically.

However, it is to be noted that even under socialist circumstances, the theoretical foundations of the concept of democracy and of the proposals for its development (however interesting they may be) are insufficient in many cases, and everyone does not know what democracy really is and what the real ways and means of its perfection are. That is the reason for illusions and false ideas relating to democracy to crop up from time to time also in socialist societies; namely, not infrequently there are attempts at broadening socialist democracy by way of such regulations which ignore the actual political relations and regularities. So it happens that

the rightful demand for perfecting democracy and the attempts at its realization sometimes simply become either a list of wishes including a demand for reforms devised according to a system of norms having no ties with real life, the realization of which is either impossible or may even be definitely harmful.

When dealing with the problems of political theory, including the attitude towards democracy, too, the phenomenon relating to philosophy, which Hegel described and refused appears here as well:

"It is a generally accepted idea that no one may tackle the sciences without prior study. Even shoemaking needs training and practice, though everybody has feet for taking the measurement and hands with the required natural skill. Only philosophy alone can be allegedly tackled without any study, learning and efforts."¹⁶

In order to achieve a really effective development of socialist democracy, the following is indispensable: scientific research into politics and, within it, into the problems of democracy; a profound knowledge of society and of political life; and the establishment of theoretically founded principles and organizational regulations relating to the perfection of democracy.

*

Our study exclusively deals with the theoretical questions of democracy. In the following, we shall discuss the bourgeois and Marxist *theories* dealing with the concept, essence and preconditions of democracy as well as with the specifics of the democratic way of the exercise of power in bourgeois and socialist countries. Owing to the aim and the theoretical character of the present book, we do not discuss in greater detail how in everyday practice the theories of principle on democracy are realized. Within the framework of the present book even less attention can be paid to giving a description of the democratic circumstances prevailing in capitalist and socialist countries as well as to outlining the tasks related to the development of democracy in the socialist countries.¹⁷

Our examinations are primarily aimed at the issues of democracy.

¹⁶ G. W. F. Hegel: *Enzyklopädie der Philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse* (1830). Verlag von Felix Meiner, Hamburg, 1959, p. 37.

¹⁷ The state and the tasks of socialist democracy in Hungary are discussed in greater detail in my book *Hogyan fejlődik a szocialista demokrácia* (How Does Socialist Democracy Develop) Budapest, 1975

Since democracy does not exist in itself: on the one hand, it is determined and conditioned from various sides by metapolitics, and on the other, democracy also has an influence on the various fields of society's life. Hence, it is indispensable for every research into this topic to deal with problems which are beyond the field of politics, that is, it must also make statements that do not exclusively refer to democracy. Here, however, we are primarily concerned with these problems from the aspect of democracy. Of course, the general theses mentioned here assert themselves in the non-political sphere in a different way, according to the conditions and laws valid there. But we are not going to analyse these relationships in our study.

It is clear from the above outlines that we do not intend to deal with every problem relating to democracy. To narrow down the field of examination to the concept, the characteristics, the essence and the form of assertion of democracy seems, at a first glance, to mean the study of rather abstract theoretical problems. Nowadays, we often experience the empiric-pragmatic view getting ahead. According to this view, the truly topical task in expanding socialist democracy consists in elaborating and submitting practical proposals. They hold that research into more universal and abstract problems of democracy appears as a break-away from practice, as autotelic theorization. Challenging this view and methodology, we believe that our research objectives do not mean a departure from the timely and topical problems of political life. To support our belief, let us quote Lenin's words about the relationship of "general" and "theoretical" and "practical" policy, which are still valid: "... in the final analysis broad, principled politics are the only real, practical politics anybody who tackles partial problems without having previously settled general problems, will inevitably and at every step 'come up against' those general problems without himself realising it. To come up against them blindly in every individual case means to doom one's politics to the worst vacillation and lack of principle."¹⁸ Hence, a Marxist-Leninist theoretical examination of the more universal sphere of problems of democracy does not necessarily mean an 'escape' from the timely problems and tasks. If research succeeds in grasping and reflecting its subject-matter in an adequate way, its results can serve the theoretical justification and a deeper theoretical foundation of timely political tasks.

¹⁸ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 12, p. 489. Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1972.

Part One

What is Democracy?

From the etimological point of view, the term 'democracy' derives from the Greek words *δῆμος* [people] and *κράτος* [authority]. According to the Athenian statesman Kleon, one of the ancient interpreters of the term, democracy is the "... government of the people, by the people, for the people...". This statement was word by word quoted during the civil war by Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, in his Gettysburg Address. At a first glance, this definition seems to be clear. However, if we take into consideration the various interpretations of the term 'democracy' and the various forms of rule known from history, this definition immediately becomes problematic.

What is the ruling people? Who does it consist of? How does it rule? What are the criteria of real popular rule? These questions have been answered by the ideologists of the various classes in various ages in diametrically opposed ways. That is why Carr, Bernstein and Murphy write, in their work on American democracy, that "...democracy is not an easy word to define. Like such words as 'progress', 'justice', or 'welfare', it does not call to mind a tangible object or a sharp image. Moreover, it can mean different things to different people. The Communist nations describe their governments as People's Democracies and Democratic Republics, and it is not difficult to see that they are imparting to the word 'democracy' a meaning quite different from that held in the Western world.

A further difficulty about defining democracy is that the term is used to describe both a theory of politics and an actual governmental mechanism. People refer to the former when they talk about 'the democratic way of life' and the latter when they talk about 'democracy in action'. In other words, democracy is both 'theory' and 'practice'.¹ Hence, it is not by chance that seeing the difficulties in defining democracy, some bourgeois ideologists give up this task. A. Wade, for example, writes as follows: "It is impossible to define an inconceivable abstraction which has a different meaning for everyone who uses it."²

¹ R. K. Carr, M. H. Bernstein and W. F. Murphy: *American Democracy in Theory and Practice*. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, 1963, p. 25.

² A. Wade: *The Way of the West*. London, 1950, p. 25.

Is democracy really an inconceivable abstraction having a different meaning for everyone? Is it really a completely impossible task to define democracy?

Although it is true that there have been various interpretations of democracy, it does not follow that it is impossible to define it; however, it does follow that there cannot be a uniform definition of democracy acceptable by everyone. But this difficulty does not stem from the inconceivable and specific nature of democracy, but from the differences in class relations which entail differences in the ideas formed about democracy and involve antagonistic class practices and programmes that underlie these ideas. Historical analyses make it clear that *the various interpretations of democracy can be typified and the typical standpoints have always reflected those of definite classes* and served the efforts of the given classes.

Chapter 1

Three Typical Interpretations of Democracy

The *first* interpretation, which considers democracy to be a definite *form of rule*, was formulated in ancient Greece. It was Plato, and especially Aristotle, who, while analysing the history and political struggles of the Greek city states, expressed their recognition that democracy does not depend on the number of persons who govern and how they do it, but on *which social stratum is ruling within the society*. Plato characterized democracy as the opposite of the oligarchic form of state. He wrote that oligarchy is a régime "... based on a property qualification, ... wherein the rich hold office and the poor man is excluded",¹ while "... a democracy, I suppose, comes into being when the poor, winning the victory, put to death some of the other party, drive out others, and grant the rest of the citizens an equal share in both citizenship and offices—and for the most part these offices are assigned by lot. ... To begin with, are they not free? and is not the city chock-full of liberty and freedom of speech? and has not every man licence to do as he likes?"²

Plato, who was an adherent of the rule of the aristocracy, refused this form of the state. On the one hand, he stated that this kind of licence would lead to an extreme equality of the people, to a decline in morals, while on the other hand he wrote that "... the probable outcome of too much freedom is only too much slavery in the individual and the state. ... Probably, then, tyranny develops out of no other constitution than democracy—from the height of liberty, I take it, the fiercest extreme servitude."³ That is, he considered democracy a way leading to tyranny.

Let us note it here, that Plato exaggerated, and sometimes distorted, certain traits of Athenian democracy, and his generalizations are not justified.

Aristotle regarded democracy as a mistaken form of state as the devolution of *politeia* which he considered to be ideal.⁴ Democracy, he

¹ Plato: *The Republic*. With an English translation by Paul Shorey, Ph. D., L. L. D., Lit. D. In two volumes, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, MCMLVI, Volume II, p. 261.

² Op. cit. p. 285.

³ Op. cit. p. 313.

writes, is that form of state in which the main power is in the hands of free people.⁵ Then he adds as an explanation: "... it is democracy when those who are free are in the majority and have sovereignty over the government."⁶

In this work of his, Aristotle repeatedly expresses his view that under democracy, as a result of the majority principle and of the participation of every free person in public affairs, the poor masses will rule over the state. "Where ... the multitude of the poor exceeds ... here it is natural for there to be democracy."⁷

Hence, the classic representatives of ancient thought, both Plato and Aristotle, not only used the term 'democracy' to denote by it the character of power, but—drawing the conclusions that necessarily follow—they also stated that where there was democracy, it meant the rule of the poor in majority.

This traditional interpretation of democracy determined for a long time the succeeding thinkers' and politicians' views on and approaches to democracy. This makes it understandable why the majority of classic bourgeois theoreticians interpreted democracy merely as the political category of the ancient times and why they did not use it in connection with the bourgeoisie's efforts to achieve liberty. It is very characteristic that even Rousseau—whom J. L. Talmon describes in his famous work *The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy*⁸ as one of the main theoretical forerunners of political democracy—had a rather negative view on democracy. Stating that here the supreme power belongs to the whole people or at least to its majority, he restricts this form of government primarily to the small states. Then he regards it as nonsensical and incorrect to have the same organ for framing the law and for carrying it out. Following this, he writes that "If we take the term in its strict meaning, no true democracy has ever existed, nor ever will. It is against the natural order that a large number should rule and a small number be ruled. It is inconceivable that the People should be in permanent session for the administration of public affairs, and it is clear that com-

⁴ Cf. Aristotle: *Politics*. With an English translation by H. Rackham, M. A. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, MCMLIX, p. 283.

⁵ Op. cit. p. 291.

⁶ Op. cit. p. 293.

⁷ Op. cit. pp. 311 and 337.

⁸ Cf. J. L. Talmon: *The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy*. F. A. Praeger Publisher, New York, 1961, pp. 6 and 38—49.

missions could not be set up for that purpose without the form of the administration being thereby changed.”⁹ In Rousseau’s opinion, a democratic system presupposes many factors that can only be managed together with great difficulty. “In the first place the State must be sufficiently small to make it possible to call the whole people together without difficulty, and each citizen must be in a position to know all of his neighbours. In the second place, manners must be . . . simple There should be, too, a considerable equality in fortune and rank Finally, there must be little or no luxury.”¹⁰ It can clearly be seen that Rousseau took into account only the ancient democracies in his interpretation. Actually, he recalls Plato’s and Aristotle’s views when he states that “... the democratic or popular system of government is, more than most, subject to civil strife and internal dissension . . .”.¹¹ Rousseau’s final conclusion runs as follows: “Were there such a thing as a nation of Gods, it would be a democracy. So perfect a form of government is not suited to mere men.”¹²

Based on the classic interpretation of democracy, the leaders of the Jacobinic dictatorship revived the term democracy and applied it to their own times. As J. A. Christophersen writes, “In ‘Rapport sur les principes...’ after giving a negative definition of democracy, Robespierre continued with a positive one:

“La démocratie est un état où le peuple souverain, guidé par des lois qui sont son ouvrage, fait par lui-même tout ce qu’il peut bien faire, et par des délégués tout ce qu’il ne peut faire lui-même.”¹³

Article 14 of Robespierre’s proposal for the draft of the Jacobinic constitution states that the people is sovereign; the government originates in and belongs to the people; the government officials are subordinated to the people. It is the right of the people to replace the government and recall its delegates at its discretion.¹⁴ Similarly, Saint-Just also identified democracy, with popular rule.¹⁵

⁹ *Social Contract*. Essays by Locke, Hume and Rousseau. With an introduction by Sir Ernest Barker. The World’s Classics, No. 511. Geoffrey Cumberlege. Oxford University Press, London, New York, Toronto, 1952, pp. 328, 330 and 331.

¹⁰ Op. cit. pp. 331—332.

¹¹ Op. cit. p. 332.

¹² Op. cit. p. 333.

¹³ Quoted by J. A. Christophersen: *The Meaning of Democracy* . . . , p. 9.

¹⁴ Quoted by A. M. Gyeborin: *Az újkor társadalmi és politikai tanai* (The social and political doctrines of the modern age). Budapest, 1962, p. 573.

¹⁵ Cf. J. A. Christophersen: *The Meaning of Democracy* . . . , p. 13.

The Jacobins restricted the rule of the people to the sphere of politics only, and they definitely opposed both the 'mad ones' and the Hébertists (Lange and Leclerc, Jacques Roux, Hébert, Chaumette and their associates) who, representing the interest of the working masses, wanted to expand both democratic equality to the field of the economy and popular rule to whole of, i.e. every sphere of social life. It was this effort that imbued F. N. Babeuf's theory and it was the same which he aimed at with his conspiracy.

The interpretation of democracy as popular rule, moreover, as the rule of the working masses, is characteristic of the views of the revolutionary democrats, and, as we shall see, it also constitutes the basis of the Marxist—Leninist approach to democracy.

The views mentioned above were not merely various theoretical interpretations of or ideas about democracy, but rather they were views which more or less adequately reflected their authors' political practice which these persons had either experienced or realized. For example, Aristotle abstracted his theses on democracy from the phenomena recurring in the variegated political history of a hundred and thirty poleis. The basis of the Jacobinic leaders' interpretation of democracy was the temporary coalition of the plebeians, i.e. the working masses, and the petite bourgeoisie—a coalition which embodied the democratic dictatorship of these social groups.

And this makes it clear that neither the aristocratic opponents of the French Revolution nor the politicians and ideologists of the then ruling bourgeoisie (similarly to their predecessors of the ancient times) refused on a theoretical but primarily on a practical (i.e. motivated by their class interest) basis the idea of democracy interpreted as popular rule, in which they—justifiably—saw such a form of exercising power as is against their own.¹⁶ And this also provides an explanation for the fact that democracy has always been a desirable objective to be achieved for the working masses.

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¹⁶ It was not by chance that E. Burke wrote at the time that "... perfect democracy is ... the most shameless thing in the world." (E. Burke: *Reflections on the French Revolution*... p. 90.)

Another interpretation of democracy, i.e. a meaning of the concept different from the former one, was shaped by bourgeois statesmen and political thinkers in the thirties and forties of the last century. Then the bourgeoisie needed this new conception for enabling itself to monopolize the term 'democracy' which was so popular with the great masses. Since then it has become so widespread that today this one has the dominant influence from among the bourgeois and petite bourgeois interpretations of democracy.

The essence of this interpretation, first laid down by the French Alexis de Tocqueville, is that democracy is merely considered to be a *form of government*. It deliberately disregards the fact *whose rule* is embodied in government, and it primarily concentrates on *the way power is exercised*.

The historical antecedents of this interpretation can also be traced. Already in Pericles's time, democracy was also considered to be a *form of government* of the free people, characterized by the followings: free citizens are equal and any of them has the right to hold any office (to ensure that public affairs be dealt with undisturbed, the poor are to given adequate payment); government is realized by several people (i.e. regularly convened popular meetings, courts of law consisting of persons elected from various strata, etc.). Besides fundamentally determining democracy from the point of view of possessing power, Aristotle characterized it, when writing about its forms, as follows: "... all alike share equally in the government..." that is, it is a system in which "... the poor have no more prominence than the rich, and neither class is sovereign, but both are alike."¹⁷ However, Aristotle did not consider the actual direct rule of the people (i.e. when everything is settled by way of plebiscites) to be democracy: "... an organization of this kind, in which all things are administered by resolutions of the assembly, is not even a democracy in the proper sense", he wrote.¹⁸ Then he continues to say that "... in democracies they assign pay for the poor...", the offices are assigned by way of drawing lots and without any property-qualification, "for all citizens to be members of the deliberative body and to decide all these matters is a mark of a popular government...", "... it is the democratic principle for all to have the right to hold office...",

¹⁷ Aristotle: *Politics*, p. 301.

¹⁸ Op. cit. p. 305.

and finally, "... in democracies of this sort everybody lives as he likes and 'unto what end he listeth'".¹⁹

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it was primarily Spinoza and then Montesquieu who emphasized the method of governing and denoted it as democracy. Spinoza interpreted democracy as a form of government where citizens are equal before the law, where each of them has general suffrage, the freedom of speech and thought is asserted and governing is realized in a constitutional framework. In Montesquieu's view, democracy is expressed in voting, that is, in the fact that the people appoint their officials, voting is open, namely, the direct legislative power of the people is asserted.²⁰

During the French Revolution as well as the decades directly following it, it was the first interpretation of democracy that came into the fore, stirring heated debates and so to say 'compromising' the idea of democracy for a time in the view of bourgeois ideologists and politicians. Their negative, refusing approach to democracy only ceased to exist when the basic meaning of the term had been radically changed and this new view had been spreading. In Z. Bauman's view, the elaboration of this change in meaning is due to Alexis de Tocqueville. As he writes, "The ruling class, whose class opponents can make it face an enormous integrating and mobilizing world-outlook symbol, can always choose between two alternatives: (a) it attempts to make the champions of this symbol disappear and deprive the symbol of its positive emotional content, ... or (b) it accepts the social popularity of the term and makes every effort to fill it with a content that is advantageous from its own point of view. ... The first thinker who related political concepts developed within the framework of liberal—bourgeois thought to the term 'democracy' was Alexis de Tocqueville. ... It follows from Tocqueville's reasoning that democracy does not mean the rule of the masses of people, but seeing to it that the individual might remain independent of the state and of the obtrusive interference of society. This meant a complete turn in the history of the term and broke with its traditional content. It is just this line that the development of the bourgeois interpretation of the term 'democracy' is progressing."²¹

¹⁹ Op. cit. pp. 321, 347, 427 and 437.

²⁰ See e.g. Spinoza's *Tractatus politicus* and *Tractatus theologico-politicus* (especially the XVIth and XVIIth chapters of the latter); Montesquieu's *L'Esprit des Loix* (especially the 2nd, 3rd, 5th and 8th chapters of the first part).

The above interpretation of democracy was first formulated by Alexis de Tocqueville. It appears in several of his works, among which we refer primarily to his monograph *Democracy in America* written in 1835.

Describing the state of affairs in Europe in the wake of the Holy Alliance, in the opening chapter of his work, Tocqueville writes: "the democracy which governs the American communities appears to be rapidly rising to power in Europe...A great democratic revolution is going on amongst us."²² Thus he ignores the relations between democracy and the concrete power relations.

The democratic revolution means for him a gradual development toward equality. Here again he discusses democracy independently of the form of power. Analysing the social conditions in France he states that, despite the opposition of the leaders of the state, democracy has already been achieved. "The most powerful, the most intelligent, and the most moral classes of the nation have never attempted to take hold of it in order to guide it...Its existence was seemingly unknown, when suddenly it acquired supreme power..." Tocqueville denounces the legislators who conceived the rash project of destroying democracy, "instead of instructing it and correcting its vices..." "The democratic revolution has taken place in the body of society, without that concomitant change in the laws, ideas, customs, and manners, which was necessary to render such a revolution beneficial. Thus we have a democracy, without anything to lessen its vices and bring out its natural advantages."²³

Tocqueville continues by saying that "the state becomes democratic, and the empire of democracy is slowly and peaceably introduced into the

²¹ Z. Bauman: *Op. cit.* — It should be noted here that with Tocqueville the unambiguous definition of democracy as a form of government is completely missing, moreover, there are contradictory statements in this respect. J. Christophersen was fully right in his criticism when he wrote that "More ambiguities occur in Tocqueville's terminology, and especially in his use of 'democracy' to signify: (1) a potential danger to liberty; (2) something directly alien to liberty; and (3) something of which liberty was the essential property.... Typical ambiguities can also be seen when Tocqueville used 'democracy' to signify something contrary to socialism...., and in a few other cases to indicate a relationship of synonymity between 'democracy' and 'socialism'....". (J. Christophersen: *The Meaning of Democracy*..., p. 313.)

²² Alexis de Tocqueville: *Democracy in America*. Vol. 1—2, New York, The Century Co., 1898, Vol. 1, p. 2.

²³ *Ibid.* p. 7.

institutions and the manners of the nation."²⁴ What is to be done under such circumstances? Tocqueville makes it clear right away that he holds it to be an "impious and detestable maxim that, politically speaking, the people have a right to do anything. . . ." "If ever the free institutions of America are destroyed, that event may be attributed to the omnipotence of the majority, which may at some future time urge the minorities to desperation, and oblige them to have recourse to physical force."²⁵ The author is convinced that democracy requires the establishment of a political constitution in which "all men would feel an equal love and respect for the laws of which they consider *themselves* as the authors; in which the authority of the government would be respected. . . . Every individual being in the possession of rights which he is sure to retain, a kind of manly confidence and reciprocal courtesy would arise between all classes. . . . The people, well acquainted with their own true interests would understand that, in order to profit by the advantages of society, it is necessary to satisfy its requisitions[. . .] I admit, that, in a democratic state thus constituted, society would not be stationary. But the impulses of the social body might there be regulated and made progressive. . . ."²⁶

In his three volume work Tocqueville describes American democracy as an example to be followed. The purpose of the work is to offer an in-depth analysis of the first ever practical implementation of the democratic principles. *Democracy in America* has been a classical description of the conditions in the United States in Tocqueville's time. Democracy is interpreted in it as a form of government. The thorough study covers the forms, principles, institutions, opportunities, methods and future tendencies of democratic government, as well as, the dangers threatening the democratic system.

In the Preface to the third volume, Tocqueville repeats his warning: "the democratic revolution which we are witnessing is an irresistible fact against which it would be neither desirable nor wise to struggle. . . ."²⁷

At variance with the popular belief, the touchstone of democracy throughout the ages is not equality for Tocqueville. As he puts it: "freedom has appeared in the world at different times and under various forms; it has not been exclusively bound to any social condition, and it is not

²⁴ Ibid. p. 9.

²⁵ Ibid. p. 330.

²⁶ Ibid. pp. 9—10.

²⁷ Op. cit. Vol. 2, p. 4.

confined to democracies." "The peculiar and preponderating fact which marks those ages as its own is the equality of conditions; the ruling passion of men in those periods is the love this equality."²⁸ Tocqueville has the opinion that the people tend to attach a greater importance to equality than to freedom. The democratic peoples, he writes, "call for equality in freedom; and if they cannot obtain that, they still call for equality in slavery. They will endure poverty, servitude, barbarism—but they will not endure aristocracy."²⁹

Tocqueville was the first to speak of the antinomy between equality and freedom. He, too, considered the latter as a subjective if not undefinable category. He believed that the extension of equality resulted in the abridgement of freedom, and that more freedom called forth more inequality. This "antinomy" has been a pivotal issue in the debates among contemporary bourgeois political scientists. Further, it is the theoretical basis for both the opponents of the attempts by either the state, or social forces at bringing about more equality, and the adherents to the anti-democratic legal provisions. It is invoked whenever an attempt is made to depict socialism—which favours equality—as a system bent on the oppression of freedom. Finally, the tenet on socialism *versus* the "free world" is a vulgar interpretation of Tocqueville's idea.

The author writes of those who strive to restore or sustain the old feudal conditions, in the final chapter of his study. "I apprehend that such men are wasting their time and their strength in virtuous but unprofitable efforts. The object is not to retain the peculiar advantages which the inequality of conditions bestows upon mankind, but to secure the new benefits which equality may supply." The final sentence of the trilogy goes as follows: "The nations of our time cannot prevent the conditions of men from becoming equal; but it depends upon themselves whether the principle of equality is to lead them to servitude or freedom, to knowledge or barbarism, to prosperity or to wretchedness."³⁰

Since the middle of the last century, this new interpretation of democracy given by Tocqueville has gradually spread in bourgeois political literature. By now, it has been accepted by most of the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois theoreticians and, through this, it has become characteristic of bourgeois public thinking in the field of politics.

²⁸ Ibid. p. 100.

²⁹ Ibid. pp. 102—103.

³⁰ Ibid. p. 348.

What is democracy according to this interpretation? Let us neglect here the authors living in the 19th and early 20th centuries and concentrate on the typical definitions of our generally accepted contemporaries. Let us quote first John and Mavis Biesanz whose work mentioned below has been published in several editions and who have received great recognition by it in social science circles. "Democracy", they write, "may be defined as *a political system that holds the government responsible to the governed through free and frequent elections offering a genuine choice of candidates for office, and that allows free discussion and a chance for the opposition to replace those in office.* This definition limits the meaning of democracy to a way of choosing a government and holding it responsible to the people for its actions."³¹

Although S. K. Padover does not explicitly state that he limits democracy to a form of government, his definition is very similar to the one quoted above: "... democracy is a political system wherein the citizens share power, freely choose their rulers, and retain permanent (if only ultimate) control over their government."³² As a summary, he repeats later that "Democracy ... is a system over which the citizens exercise control and which they can use for themselves. It is *their* government, as de Tocqueville stressed."³³

S. M. Lipset, one of the most respected representatives of political science writes about it as follows: "Democracy in a complex society may be defined as a political system which supplies regular constitutional opportunities for changing the governing officials, and a social mechanism which permits the largest possible part of the population to influence major decisions by choosing among contenders for political office."³⁴

W. Kornhauser, another eminent representative of American political science, has a statement which is almost word for word the same as the above: "*Democracy is essentially an institutional procedure for changing leadership by free competition for the popular vote.*"³⁵

This new bourgeois interpretation of democracy soon found its way to

³¹ J. and M. Biesanz: *Modern Society. An Introduction to Social Science.* Third Edition. Prentice-Hall International. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1964, p. 478.

³² S. K. Padover: *The Meaning of Democracy*, pp. 9—10.

³³ Op. cit. p. 76.

³⁴ S. M. Lipset: *Political Man. The Social Bases of Politics.* Doubleday and Co., Garden City, New York, 1963, p. 27.

³⁵ W. Kornhauser: *The Politics of Mass Society.* The Free Press of Glencoe, 1963, p. 130.

the workers' movement, too. Eduard Bernstein, the forefather of revisionism, recognized the essence of the change in meaning in this bourgeois interpretation of democracy and he made efforts to slip it in the working-class movement at the end of the last century through his anti-Marxist "classic" work *"The Preconditions of Socialism and the Tasks of Social Democracy"*. "Everyone who uses today the word democracy means more by it than a mere form of rule," he writes trying to belittle the fact that democracy means class rule. "We get nearer to the problem if we express ourselves in a negative way and we say that democracy is a classless rule, which means such a social situation in which no class has political privileges against the totality," he continues and thus he completely deprives democracy of its class content, negating the class character of the state. Then he echos the fear of the bourgeoisie of the exploited majority: "This negative explanation also has the advantage that it allows less space than the word people's rule does for the thought that the individual is oppressed by the majority. . . . Today we find that the oppression of the minority by the majority is not democratic, though originally it was completely compatible with people's rule. According to the present conception, the concept of democracy involves a legal concept: *the equality of those belonging to the community* and here is the limit to the rule of the majority. . . . It is sure that democracy is not an absolute shield against those laws which some feel to be tyrannic," he continues his train of thought, and then idealizing the contemporary bourgeois conditions he concludes: "In our age it is an almost absolute certainty that the majority of a democratic state will not pass such laws which will lastingly impair personal freedom, since the majority of today may become at any time the minority of tomorrow, and every law which is a burden on the minority would also threaten the members of the temporary majority. What majority despotism did during the actual civil wars"—he recalls the slanders of the counter-revolutionary classes—"is basically different from the majority rule of modern democracy. . . . The longer democratic institutions have existed in a modern state system, the more they respected and considered the rights of the minorities, and the more party struggles have lost from their hostility,"³⁶ beautifies Bernstein the rule of the bourgeoisie.

Stafford Cripps, who was for a long time one of the well-known

³⁶ E. Bernstein: *Die Voraussetzungen des Sozialismus und die Aufgaben der Sozialdemokratie*. Stuttgart, 1899, pp. 122 and 124.

leaders of the British Labour Party and during the war the Ambassador to Moscow, then a minister, formulates the standpoint of modern reformism in the following way: "By democracy we mean a system of government in which every adult citizen is equally free to express his views and desires upon all subjects in whatever way he wishes and to influence the majority of his fellow citizens to decide according to those views and to implement those desires. To this there is a necessary corollary, that he must not use his own freedom of thought, speech or action so as to deprive others of a like freedom."³⁷

The concept limiting democracy to the form of government could only develop and spread under such social conditions when the question of "who beats whom" had already been definitively settled in favour of the bourgeoisie, that is, when the rule of the capitalist class had already become stable. In other words, when the aristocracy did *no more* and the working class did *not yet* mean danger to their power. The various strata of the propertied class gradually merged into one, uniform class. As there was no more need for measures discriminating the counter-revolutionary aristocracy, it might come into the fore to create the propertied classes' equality under law and to seek political forms that would serve optimal governing. Then in both political practice and political theory discussions about the character of ruling were pushed to the background, and the thorough examination of the forms of rule became the topic of the day. It was under these historical circumstances that the interpretation of democracy, which one-sidedly limited democracy to the forms of governing, was becoming more and more general. This interpretation not only avoids dealing with the character of power, but it concentrates attention on the "stage" of the existing bourgeois conditions, and thus it is a conception which optimally serves capitalism.

It is especially true under imperialism that bourgeois and petit-bourgeois statements use this democracy interpretation almost exclusively for manipulative purposes. The conception limiting democracy to the forms of government serves at the same time both to evaluate and condemn socialist revolutions and liberation movements and to exalt bourgeois society. Bourgeois ideologists condemn the dictatorship of the proletariat primarily by analysing its official procedures and governing;

³⁷S. Cripps: *Democracy Up-to-Date*. Some Practical Suggestions for the Reorganization of the Political and Parliamentary System by Sir Stafford Cripps. George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London, p. 21.

as they say, while it restricts and abolishes the exploiters and makes the people rule, it does not "observe" such principles of democracy, i.e. democratic governing, as the respect of the minority or the right of the minority to become one time majority, etc. These are the usual accusations against socialism since the Great October Socialist Revolution, while they are silent about and ignore the fact that this has been the only system in world history, which has realized democracy in the true sense of the word and has ensured that people can assume real power.

At the same time, they make every effort to qualify the formal democracy of bourgeois societies as a superior form of rule. They do it on the basis of declaring certain forms of government to be *a priori* criteria of democracy.

They emphasize the fact that in bourgeois democracy various political views may be expressed, that quite often real competition develops between the bourgeois parties and they take over the government alternately, and that various other forms of the democratic way of exercising power are also realized.

At the same time, however, they are silent about and they consciously conceal the fact that all this political movement can only be realized within the framework of and determined by the class rule of the bourgeoisie, that is, in a restricted way, so that it may not threaten the existing power.

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The *third* type of the democracy interpretations disregards the original political meaning of democracy. It broadens the concept of democracy to a category which surpasses the sphere of politics, which is completely general, comprehensive and positive.

This interpretation started to spread during the First World War and in the period immediately following the war. It figured primarily as the propaganda slogan of the Entente powers who "in defence of democracy" attacked the "tyranny" and "barbarism" of the Central Powers. It was at that time that following became stereotype theses in political dictionaries: "democracy=humanism", "democracy=civilization", "democracy=freedom", etc. It was Wilson and Masaryk who first formulated these theses, and they soon had countless followers who variegated and spread them.

After the Great October Socialist Revolution, this comprehensive, or incomprehensible, interpretation of democracy also served as a propaganda means in the struggle against socialism which was labelled as

“primitive Bolshevik socialism” that trampled every human value into the dust.

The rightist, reformist social democrat theoreticians, like K. Kautsky, E. Bernstein, M. Adler, O. Bauer and others, joined this anti-communist campaign carried out in the name of some democracy having no class character.

Between the two world wars, this non-political, more comprehensive interpretation of democracy, as well as its political use, became extended to include the theses “democracy=anti-totalitarianism” and “democracy=anti-fascism”, that is, democracy was interpreted as the medium of every positive value as against these negative phenomena.

This interpretation is still used by a number of bourgeois ideologists, and through their influence it is quite widespread—of course in a very vulgar form—among the masses in the capitalist countries.

The American pragmatic philosopher John Dewey’s interpretation of democracy expresses this same extension of the concept when he writes, for example, that democracy is “a way of life”, or “. . . is more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience”.³⁸

According to a leading figure of political science H. D. Lasswell, “Democracy is a commonwealth of mutual respect”.³⁹ S. M. Lipset, who in some places of his work defined democracy as a form of government, writes in other places of the same work like this: “Democracy . . . is the only society in which the social tendencies that press man to exploit man may be restrained.” Or in another place: “. . . democracy is not only or even primarily a means through which different groups can attain their ends or seek the good society; it is the good society itself in operation.”⁴⁰

Some more interpretation variations of democracy which reduce it to propaganda commonplace—e.g. “democracy=the free world” or “democracy=the welfare society”—also belong to our third type.

Not only Marxism opposes these abstract and generalized interpretations of democracy. Some of the renowned bourgeois politologists also reject them. For example, Joseph Schumpeter states that “. . . the

³⁸ John Dewey: *Democracy and Education*. Quoted in S. K. Padover: *The Meaning of Democracy*, pp. 10 and 82.

³⁹ Quoted by S. K. Padover: *The Meaning of Democracy*, p. 85.

⁴⁰ S. M. Lipset: *Political Man*, pp. xxxii and 439.

principle of political democracy—i.e. establishing the government by election—... does, to some extent, guarantee freedom of speech and freedom of the Press, but..., for the rest, democracy has nothing to do with 'freedoms'. In particular, as regards the 'freedoms' with which the economist is concerned, the freedom of investment, the freedom of consumers' choice, and the freedom of occupational choice, we have now interesting experimental material before us that goes to show that these 'freedoms' may be restricted..."⁴¹ and he concludes that this does not mean the infringement of democratic government. S. I. Benn and R. S. Peters are right in criticizing the unjustified extension of democracy beyond the political sphere: "... 'democracy' is often used nowadays in an extended sense, to cover other things besides forms of government. Thus we come across phrases like 'economic democracy' and 'social democracy', which have only this in common with the political use of the word, that they suggest some sort of egalitarianism. Bryce remarked that, in America and Australia, to describe a person as 'democratic' meant that he was 'a person of simple and friendly spirit and genial manners ... and who, whatever his wealth or status, makes no assumption of superiority'. When a word is so far extended, it is well on the way to becoming meaningless, except as an expression of approval or disapproval."⁴² That is, they are in favour of using this term only as a political one. Essentially, S. K. Padover is of the same opinion: "... democracy is in its very essence a *political* system designed for specific *political* objectives, the foremost of which is *political* freedom."⁴³

This third type of the interpretation of democracy has not become as general as the other one which considers democracy to be a form of government. This is due partly to the traditions of politology and partly to the fact that even the adherents of this third conception are greatly divided.

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As it might turn out from the above examination of the three interpretations of democracy, instead of giving a definition of this political category, the representatives of bourgeois political science often describe

⁴¹ J. A. Schumpeter: *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*. Third Edition. Harper and Row Publishers, New York and Evanston, 1962, p. 411.

⁴² S. I. Benn and R. S. Peters: *The Principles of Political Thought. Social Foundations of the Democratic State* Free Press, New York, 1965, p. 394.

⁴³ S. K. Padover: *The Meaning of Democracy*, p. 7.

only certain aspects of it (e.g. type two: forms of government) or only some of its consequences. (This is the situation in case of the third interpretation.) That is, instead of the question "What is democracy?", they answer the question "What characterizes democracy?". Naturally, the characteristics of democracy cannot be separated from the democracy of which they are manifestations, however, in spite of this, there are two different levels in question. "What is democracy?" is a question about the essence and the answer given to it separates differing political and class standpoints. "What characterizes democracy?" is a question the answer to which is given by referring to phenomena that are determined by these standpoints. These two levels, viz. that of the essence and that of the phenomena, must not be confused.⁴⁴

This outline of the historical evolution of democracy interpretations clearly shows that in the course of history the concept of democracy of the exploiting classes and their allies has gradually become empty. This has come about in two different ways: on the one hand, democracy has been restricted to forms of government only, while on the other hand, its concept has been extended so much that it actually has become impossible to interpret the term. The result, however, has been the same in both cases: the word democracy has lost its ominous meaning for the exploiting, ruling classes. It is no longer consistent with its etymology, namely, it does not mobilize the workers to realize people's rule, but instead, it has become a means of misleading the masses.

The study of the various interpretations of the term democracy more or less clarifies the various aspects of democracy. The first one directly, the second one although indirectly but still makes it clear that

1. democracy is a *political category*, it is *the political form of the power of a given class*;

2. democracy is the unity of two aspects: on the one hand, and *primarily*, it denotes a *given class power*, on the other hand—subordinated to but inseparable from the former—it also expresses the form of exercising power, the form of government.

What can this typology be used for?

First, it convincingly proves that *there is no democracy in general; every democracy is concrete*, and is a political practice—and theoretical category—related to a definite age and a definite class.

⁴⁴ As it will turn out from the following chapters, this separation not only has an epistemological but also a practical, praxeological significance.

Secondly, a typology of the various interpretations of democracy also proves that essentially they do not derive from individual but from class differences; consequently, the typical interpretations represent definite social standpoints. That is, there are always reflected—more or less accurately—real relations in them. This is true in two senses: on the one hand, these relations appear in the form of the power relations practised or intended to be practised by the given classes, and on the other hand, in that of a strictly determined class attitude towards the existing or planned power. That is why in this relation the above-mentioned interpretations are not subjective and inconceivable abstractions. Consequently, their examination does not mean the consideration and analysis of fantasies and groundless views, but on the contrary, it does mean the study of reality in an indirect way, that is, starting out from the reflection of reality.

Finally, in the course of making this typology, *the various actual (or supposed) aspects of democracy become clear*, and this makes it possible to get a more precise picture of democracy reflected differently in the consciousness of the various classes, to discover the proper place of this phenomenon in social life, and by this, to acquire a more adequate knowledge of it.

Chapter 2

The Marxist-Leninist Interpretation of Democracy

2.1. The Concept of Democracy

In his work criticizing Hegel's philosophy of law, Marx characterizes democracy as a form of government, as a political system; as he writes, democracy is a kind of institutional order. In what does this form of government differ from monarchy and, in general, from the political relations of feudal society? In Marx's opinion, the essence of the difference lies in the fact that democracy puts an end to the semblance that social relations are subordinated to politics. And it also puts an end to the semblance that the political constitution of people originates from something superhuman. Marx points to the fact that political constitutions are brought about by people themselves. It is just this that his following statements express: "In democracy *constitution itself* appears only as *one* determination, that is, the self-determination of the people. In monarchy we have the people of the constitution; in democracy the constitution of the people. Democracy is the solved *riddle* of all constitutions. Here, merely *implicitly* and in essence, but *existing* in reality, the constitution is constantly brought back to its actual basis, the *actual human being*, the *actual people*, and established as the people's *own* work. The constitution appears as what it is, a free product of man."¹

Democracy embodies and expresses the separation of the state and political spheres from society. And in this separation, in case of a democratic form of government, it is not politics and law—not even apparently—but people that are dominant. It is exactly this that Marx expresses when he writes that "... the specific distinguishing feature of democracy is that here the *constitution* ... [is] only *one* element in the life of the people—that it is not the *political constitution* by itself which forms the state. Hegel starts from the state and makes the state objectified man." In democracy "Man does not exist for the law but the law for the man—it is a *human manifestation*; whereas in the other forms of state

¹ K. Marx and F. Engels: *Collected Works*. Vol. 3. Moscow, 1975, p. 29.

man is a *legal manifestation*. That is the fundamental distinction of democracy."²

Marx clarifies this idea from another angle, too. He writes that in a monarchy, the political man and the private citizen as well as the political state and society separate alike. In a monarchy, the totality of relations of the bourgeois society appear as particular forms of existence beside the political state, and the political state, as some organizational, regulating form, apparently determines and regulates them. On the other hand, democracy realizes the true unity of the general and the particular—as he thought it at that time. Marx was right to state that the content, the determining factor was social life itself: "In democracy the political state, which stands alongside this content and distinguishes itself from it, is itself merely a *particular* content and *particular form of existence* of the people. In monarchy, for example, this particular, the political constitution, has the significance of the *general* that dominates and determines everything particular. In democracy the state as particular is *merely* particular, as general, it is the truly general. . . . The French have recently interpreted this as meaning that in true democracy the *political state is annihilated*. This is correct insofar as the political state *qua* political state, as constitution, no longer passes for the whole."³

In his *State and Revolution*, Lenin defined democracy as follows: "Democracy is a form of the state, one of its varieties. Consequently, it, like every state, represents, on the one hand, the organized, systematic use of force against persons; but on the other hand, it signifies the formal recognition of equality of citizens, the equal right of all to determine the structure of, and to administer, the state."⁴

This definition, though in an abstract form, i.e., not yet referring to the concrete points, expresses what democracy is *in general*. *First*, it is a form of the state, i.e., a state; *secondly*, as a form of the state, it is a definite form of class rule; *thirdly*, it is such a form of rule in which participation in governing does not mean certain persons' privileges and others' being debarred, but in which it is—at least formally—recognized that everyone has equal right to determine the constitution of the state.

Dealing with democracy still in an abstract way, Lenin also emphasizes

² K. Marx and F. Engels: *Collected Works*. Vol. 3. pp. 29—30.

³ K. Marx and F. Engels: *Collected Works*. Vol. 3. p. 30.

⁴ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 25. Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1964, p. 472.

another aspect of it when he states that "...democracy is *not* identical with the subordination of the minority to the majority. Democracy is a *state* which recognizes the subordination of the minority to the majority, i.e., an organization for the systematic use of *force* by one class against another, by one section of the population against another."⁵ That is, Lenin complements his above definition by including two new points, namely, *first*, that it is the government of the majority, and *secondly*, that it is such an organization which expresses the contradictions inherent in society and makes it possible for the majority to use force in its rule over the minority, to subordinate the minority to the majority, which latter means a class or more classes.

As it becomes clear from the above, democracy is the rule of the majority. But who are considered to be the majority in the existing democracies? Democracy, as a form of government, has been practised in various forms of state—including the exploiting states as well. There, the majority of the population is constituted by the working masses. Yet, as history has proved, never has their rule been realized—not even under democratic governments. How can we speak of democracy, i.e. majority rule, in these states if it was not the working people, the majority of the population, whose will was realized? Lenin, as if he were answering these automatically arising questions, points out that in the exploiting societies, even under the most democratic conditions, the working people, who constitute the majority of the population, are deliberately channelled to get debarred from public affairs. The actual majority is by the conditions of its mere existence precluded from the possibility to assert its mass power in these democracies. Lenin wrote about this fact in connection with power exercised in bourgeois democracies: "In capitalist society, providing it develops under the most favourable conditions, we have a more or less complete democracy in the democratic republic. But this democracy is always hemmed in by the narrow limits set by capitalist exploitation, and consequently always remains, in effect, a democracy for the minority, only for the propertied class, only for the rich. Freedom in capitalist society always remains about the same as it was in the ancient Greek republics: freedom for the slave-owners. Owing to the conditions of capitalist exploitation, the modern wage slaves are so crushed by want and poverty, that 'they cannot be bothered with democracy', 'cannot be bothered with politics'; in the ordinary, peaceful course

⁵ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 25. p. 456.

of events, the majority of the population is debarred from participation in public and political life."⁶ Lenin mentioned Germany as an example, where up to the First World War the social democrats were able to do the most in utilizing the legal possibilities. Still, even under such advantageous conditions, only a minority—one million social democrat party members and three million trade union members (part of them also party members)—of the fifteen million wage earners became politically conscious and active. The rest of the population, i.e. the various propertied classes (landowners, the bourgeoisie, the petit bourgeoisie), as a result of their class-consciousness, their better organization and of the state's many-sided help in facilitating their active participation in politics, was able to form a majority which was capable of ensuring the legal representation and the effective assertion of their interests.

Besides all this, the bourgeoisie have always had various rules to debar the workers from democracy. In this context wrote Lenin: "If we look more closely into the machinery of capitalist democracy, we see everywhere, in the 'petty'—supposedly petty—details of the suffrage (residential qualification, exclusion of women, etc.), in the technique of the representative institutions, in the actual obstacles to the right of assembly . . . , in the purely capitalist organisation of the daily press, etc., etc.—we see restriction after restriction upon democracy. These restrictions, exceptions, exclusions, obstacles for the poor seem slight, . . . but in their sum total these restrictions exclude and squeeze out the poor from politics, from active participation in democracy."⁷

It is only socialist revolution which terminates, in the exploiting societies, this peculiar democracy which, *although appearing the form of 'majority government', means actually the rule of the minority*. It is only this great social transformation which ensures the real rule of the oppressed masses and their extensive participation in state and social affairs. This, however, does not take place by simply extending democracy to people who were debarred from it earlier. The democracy of the socialist revolution also means the breaking down of the opposition of the exploiting classes who are in the way of socialist transformation.⁸

As we can see in the above quotation, too, Lenin *makes difference between democracy interpreted as a state, as rule and the forms of govern-*

⁶ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 25. p. 460.

⁷ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 25. pp. 460—461.

⁸ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 25. pp. 439—440 and 461.

ment of democracy, viz. suffrage, the technique of the representative institutions, the ways of practising the rights of freedom, that is, between the former and the so-called '*democratism*'. The decisive, the essential element of democracy is the issue of rule which is always expressed in the form of exercising power and in the various ways and manifestations of democratism.

Democracy as a form of state, as a definite system and way of exercising power is different from democratism which denotes the sum total of various definite procedures and forms of governing. Such are, for example, the system of representation in voting; the filling of certain posts by way of ballots; the theory and practice of how the leaders give account of their work to their electors; the right of accepting and disseminating various ideas; how much public opinion is taken into account, etc. These procedures and forms are not necessarily linked to democracy only, that is, to the form of state. None of these elements in themselves mean either democratism or even less so democracy. For instance, the election of the Palatine of Hungary of the nobility did not mean democratism, and neither did the preceding 'public opinion poll' of the various noble factions relating to the candidates. We can only speak of democratism if these forms and procedures constitute a *definite, coherent system*.

However, not even this ensemble consisting of definite elements, i.e. democratism, is always and necessarily linked to the form of state, to democracy, and thus it cannot be treated as latter's synonym.

Democratism covers a wider field than democracy. While the latter exclusively refers to and denotes a category of the state, of politics, of the essence and ways of exercising power, democratism is not only a political category, as it may appear in various other fields as well to denote procedures of management or systems of organization.

Furthermore, democratism, when it appears in the political sphere, is a given type of democracy, that is, it denotes the degree—the narrowness or broadness—of democracy in a given country. In other words, the existence of the multitude, or even completeness, of the characteristics of democratism expresses the richness of democracy, while their lack means its poorness. And we should also add that these characteristics may differ quantitatively as well. For example, suffrage may be limited, based on census or universal; the election-system may be proportionate or based on majority vote in which case the polls of the minority are lost and thus all the mandates of the electoral district are held by the

majority. The terms 'limitedness' or 'narrowness' and 'broadness' of democratism include references to these differences as well.

In the exploiting societies, democratism usually appears in the political sphere and mostly during democratic government. From here does the semblance originate—and this is made use of by bourgeois politicians and ideologists—that democratism and democracy are synonymous. And it is also this that serves as a basis for them to push democracy as a form of rule into the background and to lay stress on certain partial problems of democratism which they identify with democracy. However, as it also becomes clear from the above, this identification is groundless and mistaken: democracy and democratism are two different, unidentifiable phenomena, more precisely, they are two different concepts denoting these different phenomena.

It is the socialist revolution which terminates bourgeois democracy in capitalism—this peculiar democracy which although *appears in the form of majority rule, actually means the rule of the minority*. It is this great social transformation which ensures the real rule of the oppressed masses and their extensive participation in state and social affairs. This, however, does not take place by simply extending democracy to people who were debarred from it earlier. The democracy of the socialist revolution also means the breaking down of the opposition of the exploiting classes who are in the way of socialist transformation. These classes may also attempt to make use of the opportunities provided by democratic rights in the interest of their opposition. These manipulations are facilitated by the fact that, on the one hand, they have traditionally developed a great influence, and on the other hand, that in the course of socialist transformation, several temporary difficulties arise; for example, among the working people, especially among the non-proletarian working people, some wavering may appear. Making use of this, the bourgeoisie might influence the population very effectively. And this might greatly endanger the construction of socialism. Therefore, socialist transformation demands and means the *actual* limitation of the democratic rights of the exploiting classes, which may as well be expressed in a formal way. That is why Lenin wrote that "... from this capitalist democracy—that is inevitably narrow and stealthily pushes aside the poor, and is therefore hypocritical and false through and through—forward development does not proceed simply, directly and smoothly, towards 'greater and greater democracy' ... forward development, i.e., development towards communism, proceeds through the dictatorship of the

proletariat and cannot do otherwise . . . ; the dictatorship of the proletariat . . . cannot result merely in an expansion of democracy. *Simultaneously* with an immense expansion of democracy, which *for the first time* becomes democracy for the poor, democracy for the people, and not democracy for the money-bags, the dictatorship of the proletariat imposes a series of restrictions on the freedom of the oppressors, the exploiters, the capitalists.”⁹ Then, characterizing the democracy of the transitional period, Lenin writes like this: “Democracy for the vast majority of the people, and suppression by force, i.e., exclusion from democracy, of the exploiters and oppressors of the people—this is the change democracy undergoes during the *transition* from capitalism to communism.”¹⁰ This fact also proves that the development of democracy and democratism does not go on simultaneously. Thus, for example, democracy may be widened in an unprecedented way, while democratism, dressed in the form of *formal* generality (which has never been really general), becomes restricted—either formally or factually—for certain exploiting groups.

As Lenin states, it is only in communist society that truly complete democracy can be realized. That is why he writes that “Only in communist society, when the resistance of the capitalists has been completely crushed, when the capitalists have disappeared, when there are no classes . . . will a truly complete democracy become possible and be realized, a democracy without any exceptions whatever. And only then will democracy begin to *wither away*, owing to the simple fact that, freed from capitalist slavery, from the untold horrors, savagery, absurdities and infamies of capitalist exploitation, people will gradually *become accustomed* to observing the elementary rules of social intercourses that have been known for centuries and repeated for thousands of years in all copy-book maxims. They will become accustomed to observing them without force, without coercion, without subordination, *without the special apparatus* for coercion called state.”¹¹

As it may appear from the above, *democracy does not automatically mean the rule of the majority of the population, that is, that of the working people*. And that is why, among other things, Lenin generally differentiates three types, more precisely phases, of the development of democracy.

⁹ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 25. p. 461.

¹⁰ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 25. p. 462.

¹¹ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 25. p. 462.

The *first type* of democracy is the one existing in the exploiting societies. He characterizes this type as being democracy only for the rich and a small portion of the proletariat. Here, as he writes, democracy is realized only exceptionally, and never completely. The *second type*, or phase of development, of democracy is the one which is practised during the transition from an exploiting society to communism. This is democracy for the poor, for the nine-tenths of the population, and it also means the suppression of the resistance of the rich by force. This is almost complete democracy, with the only limitation of the suppression of the resistance of the bourgeoisie. Finally, Lenin describes the *third type*, phase of development, of democracy, namely, that of the communist society, of which he writes that it is a complete democracy, it becomes a habit, and therefore it withers away and gives its place to the principle: everybody according to his abilities, and for everybody according to his needs. Let us quote here his words: "... genuinely full democracy, [is] becoming a habit and *therefore* [is] withering away. . . . Full democracy equals no democracy. This is not a paradox but a truth."¹²

As it becomes clear from the above Marxist definition of democracy, in Marxism, there is no 'pure' democracy, that is, such as is independent of classes, of definite social patterns. That is why we *cannot speak of democracy in general*. It is only realistic to speak of democracy if we always describe definitely the democracy of *what society, of what class, of what type is in question*. Let us repeat: there is no democracy in general; there are only different democracies defined by their class characteristics, namely, there are ancient, bourgeois, socialist and communist democracies.

2.2. Democracy as a Political Category

The Marxist interpretation considers democracy to be a *political* term. In his speech on the trade unions, for example, Lenin stated that "Democracy is a category proper only to the political sphere."¹³ In another work of his, in which he was arguing with Bukharin who used the term 'production democracy', Lenin wrote that "... every kind of democracy ... [is a] political superstructure".¹⁴ Here, in a more general form, applied

¹² V. I. Lenin: *Marxism on the State*. Moscow, 1972, p. 30.

¹³ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 32. Moscow, 1965, p. 26.

¹⁴ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 32. p. 81.

to socialist conditions, he repeated his view which he also expounded during the First World War in the course of his debates with J. Pyatakov and R. Luxemburg. According to this, "... political democracy is merely one of the possible *forms* of superstructure *above* capitalism (although it is theoretically the normal one for 'pure' capitalism)".¹⁵

This statement by Lenin means that the main political questions are so to say reflected in the term 'democracy'.

2.2.1. Democracy is the Expression of the Political Relationships between Classes

In its most general sense, politics is the definite relations of classes, which *comprehends the whole class* and expresses its *volitional*, i.e. *active, relation* to other classes, to a given totality. Furthermore, politics also means "... participation in the affairs of *the state*, directing the state, determining the forms, tasks and content of the state's activities",¹⁶ all of which are usually realized not by isolated individuals, but, primarily, by the given classes.

What are the *political* relationships of the classes expressed in? In case of antagonistic conflicts of interest, they are expressed in class struggle, in case of the coincidence of class interests, in class alliance. Class struggle or class alliance needs and means the conscious activity of the classes, or at least of their most conscious and active representatives. Of course, these people must be capable of comprehending all the fields of class movements.

It is usually *the state*, the official expression of social relations, which *mediates, fixes and expresses in a constitutional form* the political relations of classes.

Making use of class struggle aimed at changing the existing power relationships, or of alliance policy, the various classes make efforts to achieve a situation which is advantageous for them. The final objective of their efforts is the revolutionary (or in case a progressive system is on power: the counterrevolutionary) transformation of the existing conditions so that there be a profound change in the relationships among the classes and strata, that power relations become advantageous for them, enabling the optimal realization of their interests.

¹⁵ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 22. Moscow, 1964, p. 326.

¹⁶ V. I. Lenin: *Marxism on the State*. p. 109.

Democracy provides a good opportunity for the classes' political relationships to get expressed overtly, as it recognizes—at least formally—the right of any social group to take part in state affairs, in determining the trends, content and forms of state activity.

Democracy, as a political category, simultaneously and *specifically* expresses both essential aspects of politics, namely, both the *political relationships* of the classes and their *relation to the state*.

Democracy, as a form of political power, is the expression of the factual inequality of the social classes and strata. And democracy does not and cannot change *social* inequality by acknowledging, on the *political* plane, the equality of the people.

Democracy, in a given respect, reflects the social inequality of the classes and social strata. First, it expresses that *a given class is ruling*, which subordinates all the other social groups to its own interests. Then, democracy also expresses that the *ruling class is the owner of the state which it utilizes in its own interest*, and it not only debars other classes from making use of the state for such purposes, but also uses the state for imposing restrictions upon the other classes and practising its class dictatorship over them. This is what Lenin expressed when he wrote: “‘democracy, too, is a form of state’, and “... democracy, *too*, is domination ‘of one part of the population over the other’; it *too* is a form of state.”¹⁷ In his work *The State and Revolution*, Lenin added to this thought the followings: “Engels’s statement that in a democratic republic, ‘no less’ than in a monarchy, the state remains a ‘machine for the oppression of one class another’ by no means signifies that the *form* of oppression makes no difference to the proletariat.... A wider, freer and more open *form* of the class struggle and of class oppression vastly assists the proletariat in its struggle for the abolition of classes in general.”¹⁸

By acknowledging the right of the broad masses of the population to have a say in governing, in social affairs, democracy is advantageous not only for the working masses. As Lenin has pointed out, democracy is an advantageous political form for the ruling bourgeoisie as well. It was in this sense that he wrote: “... the reason why the omnipotence of ‘wealth’ is more *certain* in a democratic republic is that it does not

¹⁷ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 23. Moscow, 1964, p. 58.

¹⁸ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 25. p. 454.

depend on the faulty political shell of capitalism. A democratic republic is the best possible political shell for capitalism.”¹⁹

Besides this, bourgeois democracy also provides an advantageous condition for maintaining the whole system of inequality in a more undisturbed way. By recognizing *partial*, formal, primarily legal equality, it conceals the *social* inequalities characteristic of the system. It arouses illusions about the system, moreover, it also offers certain political opportunities of compensation for the most active elements of the lower classes. Let us quote Lenin’s thoughts in this context: “. . . the political institutions of modern capitalism—press, parliament, associations, congresses, etc.—have created *political* privileges and sops for the respectful, meek, reformist and patriotic office employees and workers, corresponding to the economic privileges and sops The mechanism of political democracy works in the same direction. Nothing in our times can be done without elections; nothing can be done without the masses. And in this era of printing and parliamentarism it is *impossible* to gain the following of the masses without a widely ramified, systematically managed, well-equipped system of flattery, lies, fraud, juggling with fashionable and popular catch-words, and promising all manner of reforms and blessings to the workers right and left—as long as they renounce the revolutionary struggle for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie.”²⁰

2.2.2. Democracy is a Specific Form of Political Phenomena

Democracy is a *global social phenomenon* in the sense that insofar as the state is the official expression of the relationships of the whole of society, *democracy as a form of state means power rule over every field of social life*.

Despite this, democracy is frequently interpreted and treated in a very narrow sense, meaning almost exclusively the opposite of bureaucratic management, that is, a better form of informing and decision-making. True, the application of democratic methods does actually mean an advantageous management system in this respect, too.

However, as democracy is precisely a phenomenon expressing a way

¹⁹ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 25. p. 393.

²⁰ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 23. p. 117.

of exercising power related to political rule, i.e. a kind of *total* system, it may not be restricted to procedural problems, to the better organization of management, or to the problems of governing methods.

Another mistaken interpretation of democracy is when it is considered to *surpass* the political sphere. This is the case, for instance, when democracy and freedom or democracy and humanism are identified. Another manifestation of this is when 'economic', 'cultural', 'public educational' or 'social' democracies are mentioned. These programme-like theses are usually formulated in the exploiting societies by the working people themselves, or by their parties, mostly in order that, by way of politics, they could have a say in economic, cultural and social affairs in the interest of the economically subordinated masses. Thus, for example, the slogan of 'economic democracy' expresses the objective of the western communist parties to ensure for the workers to have an insight into their workshops' affairs, into the economic sphere of society as well as to have a say in, and have a possibility to safeguard their interest in, these affairs.

The programme which demands the extension of democracy to the fields of the economy, culture, etc., means, *objectively*, the recognition of the fact that the various fields of social life are not rigidly isolated from each other, that is, there are no 'purely' economic, cultural, political, etc. problems. There are close interrelations among them and they mutually influence one another. Hence, from time to time, certain specific features or laws of politics can be asserted in these spheres too, or, in other words, the 'external' interference of politics may greatly influence these fields. By way of its means and purposeful influence, which always depends on the mass pressure of workers and on the extent it is taken into consideration, the state can have a significant role to play in this process.

Examined from the other aspect, i.e. from the *subjective side*, this demand expresses that the workers do not only embody a definite relation of social life, of the social division of labour, but they are *total* beings who want to assert their subjectivity in every respect. While—using Marx's words—under capitalism "... the *proletarian* ... is considered ... only as a *worker* ... [and] it [i.e. capitalism] does not consider him when he is not working, a human being ...,"²¹ it is just this total human existence which the labour movement takes into consideration and tries to assert in its demands.

²¹ K. Marx and F. Engels: *Collected Works*. Vol. 3. p. 241.

Arising nowadays, the ideas to reform and extend socialist democracy, based on similar theses and having similar demands, do actually stem from the same theoretical starting-point. Moreover, this interpretation is even supported in the socialist countries by the fact that under socialism the wide-scale application of democratic methods in non-political spheres—economic, cultural, welfare, public educational and other—becomes necessarily realized.

Insofar as the terms 'economic democracy', 'cultural democracy', etc., under either capitalist or socialist conditions, want to refer to the fact that in the mentioned fields democratic methods can be used, they actually do express, in an abstract sense (and due to their popular form in a clear way), correct thoughts, albeit these terms are very imprecise from the scientific point of view.

Democracy, first of all, is a form of state, a political category, and is not identical with democratic management methods, with democratic procedures. It is a concept expressing much more.

Secondly, the 'democracies' mentioned above confuse the metapolitical and the political spheres and blur the differences between them. By this, however, at least on a theoretical plane, the relative self-motion—regulated by specific laws—of these different fields gets lost on the one hand, while on the other, due to this theoretical blending, the determining influence of metapolitics on politics becomes untraceable.

Finally, in these procedure, it is completely left out of consideration that in the above-mentioned fields democratic methods constitute only one—though in certain instances very important—moment. This moment, however, is realized within the framework of the laws of the relative self-motion of the given social sphere, hence, its realization is determined by these laws.

Let us take, for example, the thesis of 'economic democracy'. Can it be used to abolish the technical subordination existing in the production process, or to modify the relation between the economic leaders and the employees, which is purposefully based on sub- and superordination? The answer is obviously 'No'. In this field, the technical necessities assert themselves. That is why Engels wrote the following in his article in which he argued with the anarchists who objected to authority: "... whether they [i.e. the questions] are settled by decision of a delegate placed at the head of each branch of labour or ... by a majority vote, the will of the single individual will always have to subordinate itself, which means that questions are settled in an authoritarian way. . . .

Wanting to abolish authority in large-scale industry is tantamount to wanting to abolish industry itself . . . ; on the one hand, a certain authority, . . . and, on the other hand a certain subordination, are things, which, independently of all social organization, are imposed upon us together with the material conditions under which we produce and make products circulate."²²

Of course, it is conceivable that management activity is disputed and evaluated *afterwards* in a democratic way, and the results are taken into consideration in future work in the form of recommendations or even directives. This solution may be one of the ways of developing workshop democracy. However, the possibilities for such decisions are also relatively narrow, since there are no democratic procedures that could replace skill, managing abilities and other objective requirements of controlling the production process. Furthermore, these decisions may be either *a priori* or *a posteriori* ones, and during their *actual* realization in the production process, there is no place for any more democratic procedures.

Can 'economic democracy' be asserted in deciding what to produce for the market? Obviously, it is the laws of the market which influence these decisions. Democratic procedures might at most have a role in recognizing these laws or in shaping certain production pattern alternatives. But even in these cases, the above procedures can only influence decisions within the possibilities determined by economic laws.

Naturally, 'economic democracy' cannot alter the laws of the market. Hence, 'democratic' procedures can only have a subordinated role within the more or less immanent self-motion of the economic sphere. Does it make any sense then, or put differently, is it correct to use the suggestive term of 'economic democracy' for this very narrow scope of movement which has nothing to do with economic power?

The usual political decision-making or procedural types, thus democratic principles and methods too, may certainly have a role, within certain limits, in every non-political sphere as well. It is but natural that if these are found or worked out and then are skillfully applied in the respective social sphere, it can highly improve activity in the given field.

Whatever democratic procedures are used in a non-political sphere, their applicability and usefulness and the mechanism of their effects will always depend on the immanent laws of the given sphere, hence,

²² K. Marx and F. Engels: *Selected Works in Three Volumes*. Vol. 2. Moscow, 1969, pp. 377—378.

their role will always remain subordinate. They may—sometimes significantly—influence the motion of the given field, but there is no democracy which could in itself determine the laws, the development trend, the content and the fundamental forms of the given sphere. In the early 1920's, Lenin already challenged the thesis of "industrial democracy": "... 'industrial democracy' is a term that lends itself to misinterpretation. It may be read as a repudiation of dictatorship and individual authority. It may be read as a suspension of ordinary democracy or as a pretext for evading it. Both readings are harmful."²³

"Industrial democracy breeds some utterly false ideas. The idea of one-man management was advocated only a little while ago. We must not make a mess of things and confuse people—how do you expect them to know when you want democracy, when one-man management, and when dictatorship."²⁴

Lenin's arguments about the thesis of industrial democracy involve the lesson that *democratic procedures are not purposes in themselves* which must be realized under any circumstances, without considering other things. Furthermore, they also express the recognition that *democracy must be different in the various fields of social life, that the rules of one sphere* (however well proven they are) *cannot be applied to another without restrictions, without limitations or modifications*. What is an almost necessary means of democratic *political* life may have an adverse, harmful effect in e.g. the *economy*.²⁵

Democracy, as a political category, as a specific sub-system of social life, belongs to political life which has its own specific, immanent laws. It is the study of these laws and the given sub-system's lawful relations with others, i.e. that of their interrelationships, which constitutes a

²³ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 32. p. 82.

²⁴ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 32. p. 27.

²⁵ It should be noted here that Lenin regarded the application of democratic procedures even in the field of politics as dependent upon the spheres of metapolitics on the one hand, and on political purpose, on the other. Starting out from this, he criticized in his work *What Is to Be Done?* the view which intended to create such an "equality" in the illegal workers' party which would lead to the disappearance of the difference between supporters, party members and professional revolutionaries, and on the basis of which such a "primitive democracy" would be realized that everyone might get into position. Lenin pointed out that under despotic conditions such "equality" would lead to the annihilation of the revolutionary party, while "primitive democracy" would lead to a situation in which the party would become an impotent and ineffective "organization" as a result of its incompetent leadership.

precondition for effectively influencing the social processes and for ensuring that politics, and within this democracy, may also serve as a means in the construction of socialism, of communism. The laws of this political sphere, however, can only be recognized if the various spheres of society are not confused and amalgamated into an obscure configuration, if the borderlines between certain fields of the forms of motion of society, thus e.g. between politics and economy, or politics and culture, etc., are not ignored and blurred—even if these borderlines can sometimes only be supposed.

2.2.3. Factors Determining Democracy.

The Relation of Democracy to Metapolitical Relations

Democracy, as a part of political motion, is a field which is only relatively separated from other fields of social life. In life, democracy “will never be ‘taken separately’; it will be ‘taken together’ with other things, it will exert its influence on economic life as well, will stimulate *its* transformation; and in its turn it will be influenced by economic development, and so on. This is the dialectics of living history,” as Lenin noted.²⁶

Within the interrelation between democracy and other fields, the *metapolitical sphere*—primarily the economy—*has a determining role*. What Marx said about legislation also applies to democracy, namely: “Legislation, whether political or civil, never does more than proclaim, express in words, the will of economic relations.”²⁷ Approached from another aspect, the same idea is expressed by Lenin, definitely related to democracy: “In the final analysis, every kind of democracy, as political superstructure in general . . . serves production and is ultimately determined by the relations of production in a given society.”²⁸

Furthermore, the following factors also influence democracy: the various conditions of exercising rule, the given power relations of the classes, the momentary political situation, etc. From among these, it is especially the political emergency situations which negatively influence this form of power. Besides the political relations, democracy is also shaped by the degree of the financial and cultural welfare of the popu-

²⁶ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 25. pp. 452—453.

²⁷ K. Marx and F. Engels: *Collected Works*. Vol. 6. Moscow, 1976, p. 147.

²⁸ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 32. p. 81.

lation, by the social activity of the people, by their consciousness, the trend of their actions, etc.

Under the global influence of the metapolitical sphere, democracy assumes a definite form. On the other hand, however, these forms of motion of society interact on one another independently of democracy and create a given situation for it; that is, they determine the sphere of activity, the possibilities, the conditions and limits of democracy as well as the trend of its effective assertion.

But the metapolitical sphere does not determine democracy in an absolute sense. Just like the whole of political life, democracy also possesses relative autonomy. In other words, it has a relatively autonomous movement within the political sphere. Arguing with Pyatakov's "imperialist economism" and with some leading representatives of Polish social democracy, Lenin emphasized right this point when he refused the view that under imperialism it is completely hopeless to struggle for the realization of democracy because "imperialism does not like democracy", "it is against democratic republics", etc.

Let us quote what Lenin wrote about the relationship between monopoly capitalism and democracy: "The political superstructure ... of monopoly capitalism is the change *from* democracy *to* political reaction. Democracy corresponds to free competition. Political reaction corresponds to monopoly. Both in foreign and home policy imperialism strives towards violations of democracy, towards reaction. In this sense imperialism is indisputably the 'negation' of *democracy in general*, of *all democracy*."²⁹ Lenin also pointed out that in the given case there was an actual and logical contradiction between the economic system of imperialism and one of the political forms. Namely: "The democratic republic 'logically' contradicts capitalism, because 'officially' it puts the rich and the poor on an equal footing. That is a contradiction between the economic system and the political superstructure. ... How, then, is capitalism reconciled with democracy?" he asked, and he gave the answer: "By indirect implementation of the omnipotence of capital. There are two economic means for that: (1) direct bribery; (2) alliance of government and stock exchange. ... Once we have the dominance of commodity production, of the bourgeoisie, of the power of money—

²⁹ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 23. p. 43.

bribery (direct or through the stock exchange) is 'achievable' under any form of government and under any kind of democracy."³⁰

Thus it follows from what Lenin says that although imperialism and democracy contradict each other, the existence of democracy is not as a matter of course impossible under imperialism.

Analysing this problem, Lenin completed the above statements with the followings. He also stated that political struggle might even force imperialism to realize certain aspects of democracy. Analysing the events of the First World War, he wrote that "the violation of democracy with regard to small nations ... leads either to revolt (Ireland) or to defection of whole regiments to the enemy (the Czechs)." Then he added: "In this situation it is not only 'achievable', from the point of view of finance capital, but *sometimes even profitable* for the trusts, for *their* imperialist policy, for *their* imperialist war, to allow *individual* small nations as much democratic freedom as they can, right down to political independence, so as not to risk damaging their 'own' military operations. To overlook the peculiarity of political and strategic relationships and to repeat indiscriminately a word learned by rote, 'imperialism', is anything but Marxism."³¹

Lenin summarizes the relationship between imperialism and democracy when he states that "The facts show that both capitalism and imperialism develop within the framework of *any* political form and subordinate them *all*. It is, therefore, a basic theoretical error to speak of the 'impracticability' of *one* of the forms and of *one* of the demands of democracy."³² That is why he emphasizes struggle for democracy as the main task of the labour movement under imperialism. As he writes, "This domination of finance capital ... does not in the least nullify the significance of political democracy as a freer, wider and clearer *form* of class oppression and class struggle. Therefore all arguments about the 'impracticability', in the economic sense, of one of the demands of political democracy under capitalism are reduced to a theoretically incorrect definition of the general and basic relationships of capitalism and political democracy as a whole. ... *all* the fundamental demands of political democracy are only partially 'practicable' under imperialism, and then in a distorted form and by way of exception ... But from this

³⁰ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 23. p. 47.

³¹ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 23. p. 51.

³² V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 22. p. 326.

is does not by any means follow that Social Democracy should reject the immediate and most determined struggle for *all* these demands.”³³ As it turns out from Lenin’s arguments, too, the political sphere, and within this also democracy, has its own relative independence, its own inner logic. Under certain circumstances, especially as a result of political demands or in case of changes in political power relations, developments may lead to such political events, turns or phenomena which are different from what would follow from the trends of the economy, from the general laws of the political sphere.

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Similarly to the other political phenomena, democracy does also *react*, in a relatively independent way, on the metapolitical sphere of society.

Society, and within this, the general development level of the economy, constitute such a *determined circumstance* which limits the activity of people. This circumstance is, however, contradictory, that is, it involves different tendencies which make in turn possible for the active people to choose between certain alternatives. This is not only true for the economy, but for politics, intellectual life and other spheres of society as well. Furthermore, people’s alternative choices in decisions exist not only within the given social spheres but also in their interrelations. The same applies to the relationship between the economy and politics.

Unlike the restricted possibilities of the economy, in the political sphere—as Marx wrote it—the role of the volitional factor is more dominating. At a given social development level, this ensures a relatively greater opportunity for politics to manoeuvre. In strained situations, for example in a revolution or counter-revolution, these opportunities even grow further and become more effective, or even perhaps dominating.

Thus, politics may and does occasionally counterbalance the situational disadvantages of certain classes or social strata, and it may and does modify such economic and other social circumstances which would otherwise remain unchanged. That is why it is said (and the statement is only valid within these given limits) that “politics is the field of opportunities”, that is, the science of opportunities.

Politics does react on the economy—depending on given laws and within the determined limits. This also explains, for example, the fact that at the very same economic development level, the different classes

³³ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 22. p. 145.

make efforts to realize different political alternatives, and the results of their activity lead to different utilization of the economic opportunities.

Democracy, as a political phenomenon, may be one of the ways and means of achieving a certain economic result by means other than economic, namely, political.

Democracy may ensure a freer assertion of various interests and a freer struggle for them. In this sense wrote Lenin that "... democracy does *not* abolish class oppression. It only makes the class struggle more direct, more open and pronounced, and that is what we need."³⁴

Democracy may help the workers—who are in an economically subordinate position in the exploiting societies, albeit they are equal legally, i.e., formally they would have the right to have a say in public affairs, and they are in majority—in promoting the actual realization of their interests through political means.

In exploiting societies, democracy and the struggle for it not only constitute a field and means of striving to achieve better conditions, but—under definite circumstances—they may also be a means of surpassing the given conditions. The results of the struggle for democracy gradually lead to the formulation, in the workers' mind, of the necessity of realizing socialism. That is why Lenin wrote that "The more democratic the system of government, the clearer will the workers see that the root evil is capitalism, not lack of rights."³⁵

Struggle for democracy forces open the frameworks of the existing system anyway, it points beyond them and, in case this programme is realized, it even surpasses them. "... under capitalism ... *all* ... democratic rights without exception [are] ... conditional, restricted, formal, narrow and extremely difficult of realisation," stated Lenin. Then he continued: "Yet no self-respecting Social-Democratic will consider anyone opposing the right of divorce a democrat, let alone a socialist. *All* 'democracy' consists in the proclamation and realisation of 'rights' which under capitalism are realisable only to a very small degree and only relatively. But without the proclamation of these rights, without a struggle to introduce them now, immediately, without training the masses in the spirit of this struggle, socialism is *impossible*."³⁶

³⁴ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 23. p. 73.

³⁵ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 23. p. 73.

³⁶ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 23. p. 74.

Lenin considers the struggle for democracy under capitalism to be a struggle waged in a *revolutionary* way. He states that under imperialism all the essential demands of political democracy can only be realized partially, exceptionally or in a distorted way. From this, however, it does not follow—as he explains—that we should renounce the realization of these demands. But it does follow that “... these demands must be formulated and put through [by the social democrats] in a revolutionary and not a reformist manner, going beyond the bounds of bourgeois legality, breaking them down, going beyond speeches in parliament and verbal protests, and drawing the masses into decisive actions, extending and intensifying the struggle for every fundamental democratic demand up to a direct proletarian onslaught in the bourgeoisie, i.e., up to the socialist revolution that expropriates the bourgeoisie.”³⁷

Of course, this struggle in itself does not realize the complete liberation of the proletariat, but it may and does create better conditions for the struggle for liberation. In this sense Lenin wrote that “Capitalism and imperialism can be overthrown only by economic revolution. They cannot be overthrown only by democratic transformations, even the most ‘ideal’. But the proletariat not schooled in the struggle for democracy is incapable of performing an economic revolution. Capitalism cannot be vanquished without *taking over the banks*, without repealing *private ownership* of the means of production. These revolutionary measures, however, cannot be implemented without organising the entire people for democratic administration of production captured from the bourgeoisie, without enlisting the entire mass of working people, the proletarians, semi-proletarians and small peasants, for the democratic organisation of their ranks, their forces, their participation in state affairs.”³⁸

The same idea is emphasized by Lenin when he states that “... socialism is impossible without democracy because: (1) the proletariat cannot perform the socialist revolution unless it prepares for it by the struggle for democracy; (2) *victorious socialism cannot consolidate its victory and bring humanity to the withering away of the state without implementing full democracy.*”³⁹

Naturally, the democracies of the exploiting societies do not primarily

³⁷ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 22. p. 145.

³⁸ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 23. p. 25.

³⁹ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 23. p. 74.—(my italics)

favour the exploited and oppressed classes which, under democratic conditions, have a better opportunity to struggle. They enable the exploiting classes to exercise their power in a more effective way. As we have already mentioned it above, democracy in exploiting systems conceals the actual power relationships and turns the workers' attention away from the main problems, viz. the social ones. It is in this way that democracy may become the best political cover for capitalist society.

By involving the working masses, democracy in socialist societies makes it possible that the realization of a new type of life, which is in the interest of millions, may accelerate and become more effective. The involvement of the broad masses of workers in settling social affairs—which increases their consciousness, their social responsibility and activity—is both the achievement and the precondition of the progress of socialism and communism.⁴⁰

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As it also turns out from the above, democracy *is not a purpose* but a *means* to achieve a purpose surpassing it. Engels made it completely clear when he wrote as follows: "Democracy would be quite useless to the proletariat if it were not immediately used as a means of carrying through further measures directly attacking private ownership and securing the means of subsistence of the proletariat."⁴¹

As it is also proven by the construction of socialism, democracy is *part* of this important objective and its realization, though greatly promotes, does not fulfil this objective.

Consequently, *democracy as a means* (even if socialist democracy is in question) *is always subordinated to the purpose, the objective*, viz. the effective construction of socialism, of communism. It is in this context that Marxism evaluates democracy and the application of democratic procedures. And this is why Lenin said, after the Great October Socialist Revolution, at the debates on the constituent assembly that "We shall tell the people the truth. We shall tell the people that their interests are superior to the interests of a democratic institution. We must not return to the old prejudices, which subordinate the interests of the people to formal democracy."⁴² And also this is why Lenin, on evaluating Trotsky's role in the trade-union debate, wrote that Trotsky had the democratic

⁴⁰ These issues will be dealt with in detail in the subsequent chapters.

⁴¹ K. Marx and F. Engels: *Collected Works*. Vol. 6. p. 350.

⁴² V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 26. Moscow, 1964, p. 355.

right, taken in the formal sense, to start the debate, to formulate his own platform. His actions, however, threatened the party and the trade-union movement with a split, and this might have led to a crisis of the whole socialist system. That is, formal democracy and the revolutionary interests contradicted each other. And Lenin clearly stated his opinion that the revolutionary interests were superior to formal democracy. From this the conclusion follows that "... formal democracy must be subordinated to the revolutionary interest".⁴³

Since democracy is only a political phenomenon, *the working class cannot rest satisfied with its realization*. It must go beyond the political sphere and extend its revolutionary activity of transformation to all fields of society. Marx already formulated this programme in 1843 when in his article *On the Jewish Question* he stated that political emancipation meant only a *partial* liberation of the people. In other words, political liberation does not solve the *complete* liberation of the people. Formally, political emancipation declares people to be communal beings. The task is to realize this declared community. That is why Marx wrote that "*All emancipation is a reduction of the human world and relationships to man himself*. Political emancipation is the reduction of man, on the one hand, to a member of civil society, to an *egoistic, independent* individual, and, on the other hand, to a *citizen*, a juridical person. Only when the real, individual man absorbs in himself the abstract citizen, and as an individual human being has become a *species-being* in his everyday life, in his particular situation, only when man has recognised and organised his '*forces propres*' as *social* forces, and consequently no longer separates social power from himself in the shape of *political* power, only then will human emancipation have been accomplished."

That is, political emancipation must be extended to become social emancipation. In the rest of his above-mentioned article, Marx pointed out that this objective could only be realized if the society based on private ownership would be overthrown.

Engels's conclusions completely correspond to Marx's views. For example, when analysing the system of political emancipation, i.e. democracy, he also emphasizes that it is a form of state. Another view of his is also identical with that of Marx, namely, that democracy under bourgeois conditions expresses a specific dichotomy: on the one hand,

⁴³ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 32. p. 86.

⁴⁴ K. Marx and F. Engels: *Collected Works*. Vol. 3. p. 168.

the semblance of full liberty of citizens, and on the other hand, citizens' complete subordination in the essential issue of social equality. This is what he wrote about it: "Democracy is . . . a contradiction in itself, an untruth, nothing but hypocrisy . . . at the bottom. Political liberty is sham-liberty, the worst possible slavery, the appearance of liberty, and therefore the reality of servitude. Political equality is the same; therefore democracy, as well as every other form of government, must ultimately break to pieces: hypocrisy cannot subsist, the contradiction hidden in it must come out; we must have either a regular slavery—that is, an undisguised despotism, or real liberty, and real equality—that is, Communism."⁴⁵

On evaluating democracy, Engels does not expound a view which attacks democracy in general. He only attacks democracy as it developed in bourgeois society, and he clearly sees that democracy may and does have an important role to play. Analysing Carlyle's *Past and Present*, Engels states that democracy is a transition to man's freedom. Let us quote here his words: "Mankind is surely not passing through democracy to arrive back eventually at the point of departure." "Democracy, true enough, is only a transitional stage, though not towards a new, improved aristocracy, but towards real human freedom."⁴⁶ Consequently, in Engels's view, democracy is an inevitable development phase; however, it is not the renewal of political forms of motion, as Carlyle considered it to be, but rather, it is a process towards the elimination of all political movements, towards the real emancipation of man.

In March 1844, when dealing with the situation in England, Engels wrote that the future of England would soon be democracy. Here he interpreted democracy in its original sense, i.e. in that of popular rule. "But what a democracy," he asks, and then he goes on, "Not that of the French Revolution, whose antithesis was the monarchy and feudalism, but *the* democracy whose antithesis is the middle class and property. The whole of the preceding development shows this. The middle class and property are dominant; the poor man has no rights, is oppressed and fleeced, the Constitution repudiates him and the law mistreats him; the struggle of democracy against the aristocracy in England is the struggle of the poor against the rich. The democracy towards which England is

⁴⁵ K. Marx and F. Engels: *Collected Works*. Vol. 3. p. 393.

⁴⁶ K. Marx and F. Engels: *Collected Works*. Vol. 3. p. 466.

moving is a *social* democracy.”⁴⁷ Engels states that democracy in itself cannot cure social ills. The poor cannot win a victory, cannot accomplish their struggle against the rich, for the complete elimination of social inequality in the field of democracy, i.e. of political life. Consequently, democracy is only a transition. As Engels formulated it:

“... democracy by itself is not capable of curing social ills. Democratic equality is a chimera, the fight of the poor against the rich cannot be fought out on the basis of democracy or indeed of politics as a whole. This stage too is thus only a transition, the last purely political remedy which has still to be tried and from which a new element is bound to develop at once, a principle transcending everything of a political nature. This principle is the principle of socialism.”⁴⁸

Lenin summarized the Marxist view on democracy in his work *The State and Revolution* already before the Socialist Revolution. He wrote as follows: “Democracy is of enormous importance to the working class in its struggle against the capitalists for its emancipation. But democracy is by no means a boundary not to be overstepped; it is only one of the stages on the road from feudalism to capitalism, and from capitalism to communism. Democracy means equality. The great significance of the proletariat’s struggle for equality and of equality as a slogan will be clear if we correctly interpret it as meaning the abolition of *classes*. But democracy means only *formal* equality. And as soon as equality is achieved for all members of society *in relation* to ownership of the means of production, that is, equality of labour and wages, humanity will inevitably be confronted with the question of advancing further, from formal equality to actual equality, i.e., to the operation of the rule ‘from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs’.”⁴⁹

Finally, from democracy’s being a political category it also follows that the widely spread views, actually illusions, which consider democracy to be a kind of remedy capable of solving every problem, are completely unjustified. Democracy by itself does not create any new material value, does not lead to an abundance of products nor to welfare, and it does not make the people cultured and happy. Democracy may promote better decisions in the fields of the economy and politics, in the various areas of intellectual life; it may help in involving more and more

⁴⁷ K. Marx and F. Engels: *Collected Works*. Vol. 3. p. 513.

⁴⁸ K. Marx and F. Engels: *Collected Works*. Vol. 3. p. 513.

⁴⁹ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 25. pp. 471—472.

people in the execution of the above decisions; it may influence people to lead a more rational and effective life by making use of the opportunities offered by socialism; consequently, it may promote a faster advance of society.

Democracy is a political means, and taken as such it has its advantages and deficiencies. We must be aware of this and must take it into account when we are to estimate or realize the possibilities it provides or when we are to evaluate the results achieved under a democratic system or any other achievements realized in various fields with the help of democracy. In doing so, we must take care not to underestimate either democracy or the illusions that have developed in connection with it.

2.3. Democracy and Dictatorship

Especially since the Great October Socialist Revolution and the emergence of the dictatorship of the proletariat, it has become one of the fundamental theses of bourgeois and petty bourgeois political science that democracy and dictatorship are diametrically opposed categories. After the First World War, the dictatorship of the proletariat was opposed in the name of "democracy", "pure democracy", of "democracy in general". Then, when fascism was advancing, and later in the course of the struggle against fascism, the representatives of bourgeois liberalism took a stand against fascist dictatorship which they considered to be similar to workers' power, since—in their opinion—both of them were "dictatorial", i.e. "totalitarian". "Either democracy or dictatorship; the two mutually exclude each other" is, a sentence very often quoted both in the past and at present by bourgeois statesmen and politologists.

Several reformists and revisionists joined this theoretical campaign soon after the 1917 Revolution. Among them a leading role was played by K. Kautsky and O. Bauer. In his work *The Dictatorship of the Proletariat*, Kautsky spoke of the opposition between bolshevism and opportunist social democracy as the "opposition between two fundamentally differing methods".⁵⁰ He also stated that dictatorship literally annihilated democracy.⁵¹

⁵⁰ K. Kautsky: *Die Diktatur des Proletariats*, Wien, 1918, p. 3.

⁵¹ Ibid. p. 4.

2.3.1. On Dictatorship

The analysis of the content of democracy and dictatorship also proves the incorrectness of their counterposing.

As we have already made it clear, democracy is a political category, one of the ways of exercising power of a definite class, a form of state of a given class.

And what is dictatorship?

Both in bourgeois literature in general and in the political writings of rightist opportunists, dictatorship figures, on the one hand, as a phenomenon independent of any classes, and on the other hand, as a form of government. Let us quote here Joseph Schumpeter who writes about this as follows: "This may be generalized to read that the democratic method will be at a disadvantage in troubled times. In fact, democracies of all types recognize with practical unanimity that there are situations in which it is reasonable to abandon competitive and to adopt monopolistic leadership." (Let us mention it here that J. Schumpeter made earlier competitive leadership one of the major characteristics of democracy — A. K.) "If the monopoly is effectively limited either to a definite time... or to the duration of a definite short-run emergency, the democratic principle of competitive leadership is merely suspended. If the monopoly, either in law or in fact, is not limited as to time—and if not limited as to time it will of course tend to become unlimited as to everything else— the democratic principle is abrogated and we have the case of dictatorship in the present-day sense."⁵² And here is K. Kautsky's view on dictatorship. Dictatorship, Kautsky states in the work quoted above, "in its literal sense... means rule by one man, who is exempt from all laws. It means autocracy, which differs from despotism only in that it is regarded not as a permanent state establishment but as a temporary expediency measure."⁵³

What in Fact is a Dictatorship?

"Dictatorship" and "dictator" are of Latin origin and as such they reflect the realities of the history of Ancient Rome. At the time of the Roman Republic, the person invested with absolute power by the Senate

⁵² J. A. Schumpeter: *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, New York, 1965 p. 296.

⁵³ K. Kautsky: *Op. Cit.* p. 20. Here we are not going to deal in detail with the criticism of this erroneous standpoint. In this place, just like in other places, Kautsky counterposes a type of rule with one of its forms.

at the time of an emergency, in the case of a threat of war, or rebellion was called "dictator". "Dictatorship" meant a period which, in most of the cases, was limited (lasting from six months to seven years) during which the dictator exercised power on the basis of his exceptional mandate. For several centuries, from the 5th century B.C. to the 2nd century B.C. dictators did not represent their narrow personal interests but those of the Roman Republic, i.e. the rights and power of the free Roman citizens. It was only Sulla and later Julius Caesar who became life-long dictators and who used their power to serve the interests of primarily a narrow group and only indirectly those of the ruling strata of Rome.

According to its basic and original sense by dictatorship we mean the following: 1. a mandate given to definite persons who asserted the absolute powers of a given class; 2. at the time of dictatorship that aspect of absolute power of the given class came to the foreground which laid emphasis upon asserting class dominance against other classes or external enemies; 3. naturally, this emphasized aspect of class dictatorship was asserted only at the time of emergency, i.e. for a longer or shorter period of time. After the state of emergency was over, it was the somewhat "milder" forms of the exercise of class rule that came to the fore. This means that the exercise of power by the ruling class was asserted in less obvious ways through the accepted economic and political power relationships and through the effect of intellectual life and traditions.

As seen from above, dictatorship according to its original meaning was not and could not be in contradiction with democracy. The first reason for that is that democracy had already existed long before the appearance of dictatorship in the ancient Greek city states where the rule of the tyrant or that of the absolute ruler was regarded to be in contradiction with democracy.

The second reason is that even in Rome at the time of the Republic from the 5th to the 2nd centuries B.C., although the well-to-do patricians had a basically bigger influence in administering public affairs, also the plebeians had extended rights and could have a quite a big say in public affairs. At that time, a democratic exercise of power was realized in Rome, although this democracy was not as highly developed as, e.g. that of Athens. When at this period of Roman democracy at time of outside danger or inner mutinies, a dictator was given a mandate and the state organization was accorded extraordinarily unlimited powers, this was done for the very reason of protecting the rights as well

as the democratic power of the ruling class. In other words, dictatorship appeared not as the opposite of democracy, but as a form of the assertion of the unlimited power of the ruling class.

In the feudal systems emerging after the collapse of the Roman Empire, the political thinking of the period treats both the concept of democracy and that of dictatorship as categories of a bygone age. The use of the concept dictatorship was also pushed to the background. In those days, dictatorship was regarded as antidemocratic and the dictatorial exercise of power was regarded as autocratic rule, tyranny, despotism. This tradition was continued even in modern times and even in our century; characteristically even an ardent enemy of the French Revolution, such as Edmund Burke—who did his utmost to denounce it and branded Robespierre's governing a tyranny and the French Republic "cannibalism" and a "cannibals'" republic—does not use among its critical adjectives in connection with the French Revolution the term dictatorial. And the leaders of the French Revolution did not regard aristocratic regimes as dictatorship but as a usurpation of power.⁵⁴

Up to 1918 the category "dictatorship" did not have a pejorative meaning at all. Characteristically, during World War I, neither side used the term dictatorship for denouncing the other. The Entente Powers and their allies accused the leaders of the Central Powers of the autocracy and "tyranny of the German Kaiser" and of "Hun barbarism" and they regarded themselves as the representatives and friends of democracy. United States President Woodrow Wilson the most respected theoretician of democracy at that time, when speaking of Germany used the expressions military autocracy and when speaking of the rulers of the Central Powers he named them autocratic monarchs. When outlining the aims of the USA, Wilson expounds that the United States' only aim is "to protect all peoples... against attacks by any autocratic power. We fight for freedom, for a democratic system and for the autonomous development of every nation... Nations have to become aware of their solidarity uniting them and have to cooperate in protecting their common vital interest against the attacks of autocracy and despotism".⁵⁵

The Central Powers also accused the Antante Powers of all kinds of imperialism, they called them oligarchic and oppressive powers, but they

⁵⁴ Cf. E. Burke, : *Regicide Peace*, London, 1964, pp. 70., 76., 114.

⁵⁵ Wilson's Speeches and Messages on War, Peace and the Alliance of Nations, Budapest, 1919, pp. 64., 82., 94—95. (In Hungarian)

did not accuse the other side using dictatorial methods or of dictatorship either.

As seen from the above, the original historical interpretation of dictatorship is not identical with the everyday meaning of the word that—by now—has become general. This identifies dictatorship with emergency measures taken by the government and a rule based on administrative coercion. In a more exact and adequate way, these latter phenomena could not be called dictatorial exercise of power. However, dictatorship and dictatorial exercise of power are not identical. First, because dictatorship is not only exercise solely through government measures or coercive steps taken by the government but also through procedures and measures lying beyond the realm of state power. For example, the working class realizes the construction of socialism within the framework of and through the help of the dictatorship of the proletariat. In the course of this, as Lenin writes, it reeducates itself but also the masses of small entrepreneurs and intellectuals are influenced by this reeducation. The dictatorship of the proletariat does not by all means and necessarily realize these tasks through administrative measures. Secondly, coercive measures adopted by the state may not only serve the oppression of former exploiters, but also other positive social processes. Coercive measures may be directed not only against the class enemy, but also against persons violating socialist laws, such as criminals, etc. And these latter measures do not mean that the proletariat is using its dictatorship against them. Finally, democracy too, does not preclude the adoption of coercive or emergency measures by the state.

It happens on several occasions that owing to a natural catastrophe, war tensions or war, the government of the ruling class declares the state of emergency in certain territories or even in the whole of the country, however, without the elimination of the democratic exercise of power. If all kinds of emergency and coercive measures taken by the government would automatically bring about the imposition of dictatorship upon society, then we could not understand why we regard e.g. the USA as a democracy, when in this country, in case of a natural disaster, the President can declare certain areas to be national disaster areas where emergency measures may be taken.

Therefore, we must not confound dictatorship as the totality of one form of class rule with one of its possible manifestations which is by no means necessarily identical with the dictatorial exercise of power. The dictatorship of a given class, i.e. its absolute and undivided power

may manifest itself in a democratic form, yet it may also be realized through excessive measures, and through a series administrative, coercive and emergency methods.

The Marxist-Leninist interpretation of dictatorship is basically identical with the classical Roman meaning of dictatorship. Marxism has considered dictatorship to be primarily the absolute power of a given class, power against another class or classes maintained by way of regular force. As Lenin wrote it in 1906: "Authority—unlimited, outside the law, and based on the force in the most direct sense of the word—is dictatorship."⁵⁶

"The scientific word 'dictatorship' means nothing more or less than authority untrammelled by any laws, absolutely unrestricted by any rulers whatever, and based directly on force," he continued and then he stated that in the course of the 1905 revolution, the germs of people's dictatorship did appear as against the power and dictatorship of the tsarist regime.⁵⁷

At the time of the First World War, Lenin emphasized this view of his again when he was arguing with Pyatakov: "Dictatorship is domination of one part of society over the rest of society, and domination, moreover, that rests directly on coercion."⁵⁸

Furthermore, Marxism also makes it clear that there exists no dictatorship in general, there is no abstract dictatorship which is a purpose in itself and is independent of classes. Dictatorship is not brought about by the megalomania or the thirst for power of individuals or of small groups. Dictatorship is the only means at the disposal of the individual classes to assert their interests in societies which have antagonistic classes. Consequently, dictatorship is always exercised by individual classes and it always serves their class interests.

In their works, Marx, Engels and Lenin started out from the interpretation of dictatorship stemming from Ancient Rome when they created the widely used concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Marx and Engels gave the following criteria for the term.

1. The working class in the dictatorship of the proletariat becomes a ruling class and realizes his power in society. Engels wrote: "Since each political party sets out to establish its political rule in the state,

⁵⁶ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 10. p. 244.

⁵⁷ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 10. p. 246.

⁵⁸ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 23. p. 69.

so the German Socialist Workers' Party is necessarily striving to establish its rule, the rule of the working class, hence 'class domination'. Moreover every real proletarian party, from the English Chartist onwards, has put forward a class policy, the organization of the proletariat as an independent political party, as the primary condition of its struggle, and the dictatorship of the proletariat as the aim of the struggle".⁵⁹

2. In their view, in the dictatorship of the proletariat, the working class, by asserting its absolute power, carries out all those changes that have become absolutely necessary owing to the high level of the forces of production that have emerged in the womb of exploiting society, the prevailing social conditions and the need for the further development of society. The realization of these aims were not possible earlier, because of the resistance of the bourgeoisie and the oppressive measures of its state. Therefore, the working class is capable of asserting the preconditions of progress only relying upon its own power and overcoming the resistance of the bourgeoisie. Marx and Engels write as follows: "We have seen above that the first step in the revolution by the working class is to raise the proletariat to the position of the ruling class, to win the battle of democracy." And they continue their train of thought in the following way: "The proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralise all instruments of production in the hands of the State, i.e. of the proletariat organised as a ruling class; and to increase the total productive forces as rapidly as possible.

Of course, in the beginning, this cannot be effected except by means of despotic inroads on the conditions of bourgeois production. (...) If the proletariat during its contest with the bourgeoisie is compelled, by the forces of the circumstances, to organise itself as a class, if, by means of a revolution, it makes itself the ruling class, and, as such, sweeps away by force the old conditions of production, then it will, along with these conditions, have swept away the conditions for the existence of class antagonisms and of classes generally, and will thereby have abolished its own supremacy as a class."⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: *Selected Works in Two Volumes*. Vol. 1. Moscow, 1950. p. 556.

⁶⁰ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: *Collected Works*. Vol. 6. Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1976. pp. 504—506.

3. The dictatorship of the proletariat does not mean that the rule of the new ruling class is made final and absolute. This is clear from the above, but also when we read the critique of the Gotha Programme or Marx's famous letter to J. Weydemeyer which also emphasizes that the dictatorship of the proletariat will last only in a transitory period of history: Marx writes the following in his letter to Weydemeyer: "the class struggle necessarily leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat" but he also adds that "this dictatorship itself only constitutes a transition to the abolition of all classes and to a classless society."⁶¹

In the *Critique to the Gotha Programme* we read the following: "Between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. There corresponds to this also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat."⁶²

Through the use of the term dictatorship of the *proletariat* Marx and Engels wished to emphasize that absolute powers are not in the hands of a single person representing a given social class, but directly in the hands of the working class, the avant-garde of progress. The other word of the term, *dictatorship* (of the proletariat) indicates that this power becomes necessary owing to extraordinary circumstances. This is so, on the one hand, because of the shaping of such a new order whose beginnings could by no means arise within the framework of old society. On the other hand, the powers fighting for socialism have to act in such a state of emergency, and they have to overcome such an internal and external resistance put up against the new rule, that this may really be compared to the states of emergency which had to be imposed at given periods of the history of Ancient Rome. Finally, Marx and Engels used the term the dictatorship of the proletariat for indicating that this rule of the working class—similarly to the dictatorships of Ancient Rome—may in the foreseeable future accomplish its tasks and, after this, it ceases to exist as a specific form of the exercise of power. This idea was also based on and reflected the assumption that socialist revolution will break out at the same time in several highly developed industrialized capitalist countries and will, as a result, revolutionize the whole world.

⁶¹ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: *Selected Works in Two Volumes*. Vol. 2. Moscow, 1949. p. 410.

⁶² Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: *Critique of the Gotha Programme*. Moscow, 1959. p. 31.

Because of that, they conceived of this period of transition from capitalist into developed communist society as requiring a considerably short historical period.

It goes without saying that Marx and Engels did not think of the dictatorship of the proletariat as a sort of tyranny by the working class. This is also indicated by the idea included in the Communist Manifesto on the "fight for democracy". Engels set forth this idea in clear words when he wrote: "If anything is certain, it is that our party and the working class can only come to power in a democratic republic. This is even the specific form of the dictatorship of the proletariat, as the Great French Revolution has already shown. (...) In my opinion the only system fit for the proletariat is the one and indivisible republic."⁶³

Obviously, had the term the dictatorship of the proletariat had any negative overtones meaning also a type of antidemocratic and tyrannical rule, then—owing to the most basic political considerations—Marx and Engels would by no means have used it, thereby seemingly suggesting that the working class intends to establish a tyrannical rule after its rise to power.

Lenin could set as an aim the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat to be fought by the working class following the interpretation given by Marx and Engels on the dictatorship of the proletariat.

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The shift in the meaning of the word dictatorship and the "discovery" of the contradiction between democracy and dictatorship happened only after the Great October Socialist Revolution.

The Entente Powers took open measures against Soviet power openly professing itself to be the dictatorship of the proletariat. They did not only help counterrevolutionary bourgeois, monarchist and petty bourgeois forces but they also started their intervention and occupied several territories of Soviet Russia. In order to justify this intervention it had become absolutely necessary to conceal the class character and antisocialist aims of these actions. Various justifications were given, the most important being the conception according to which the struggle between reactionary forces and Soviet power is in fact the struggle between democracy and dictatorship. For this, naturally, the opposition between democracy and dictatorship had to be constructed. It was Karl Kautsky's

⁶³ Frederick Engels: *A Contribution to the Critique of the Erfurt Social Democratic Draft Programme of 1891*, Moscow, 1959, pp. 58—59.

writing on the *Dictatorship of the Proletariat* that gave an "inestimable" help to this. Kautsky, as a recognized Marxist, whose judgements could be interpreted as reflecting "genuine" Marxism, tries to prove that 1. dictatorship is not by all means connected with the rule of classes. 2. Furthermore, Kautsky stated that Marx did not at all desire the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat and this term is only an "unfortunate" one; 3. The dictatorship of the proletariat that had arisen in Soviet Russia does not mean the rule of the working class and, owing to circumstances, it cannot be a stable rule; 4. Soviet power constitutes a severe violation of the general criteria and rules of democracy, since Soviet Russia has drifted from the advocates of democratic rule.⁶⁴

Besides that, Soviet power deprived the class enemy and its henchmen of the rights of assembly and organization. In other words, it passed measures which every revolution passes against its adversaries.

Thus, on the one hand, Kautsky's ideas negate the proletarian character of the existing rule of Soviet Russia, on the other, they lay the foundation of a theory bringing dictatorship into opposition with democracy, this latter having presumably common criteria with "pure" and "full" democracy, allegedly, without class character and without any dictatorship. This renders it possible to contrast an abstract concept of democracy with any abstract concept of dictatorship.

From this time on, the negative interpretation of dictatorship as well as the declaration of the opposition between democracy and dictatorship has become the most frequently voiced tenet of bourgeois, petty-bourgeois and reformist social democratic philosophy.

In the early 1930's when the threat of Hitler's fascism had already become clear, Kautsky, in another study of his, repeated his view that the split of the communists and the social democrats and their fight against each other stemmed from their opposition on the issue of the relationship between dictatorship and democracy. Then, similarly to the bourgeois propaganda of the time, the anti-communist Kautsky denigrated the construction of socialism in the Soviet Union by saying

⁶⁴ This latter view seemed to be corroborated through the fact that Soviet power in its self-defence had to resort to emergency measures and had to introduce the red terror in answer to the white terror of counterrevolutionary forces. In the course of this, the generally declared democratic rights born after the February Revolution were suspended. (These rights were *in fact* already suspended in July 1917 when the Kerensky Government tried to terminate dual power and drove the Bolsheviki into illegality, yet these rights were not invalidated also *de jure*.)

that the taller the new factories are, the more the workers suffer from hunger and misery. Human life and working force are necessarily treated with disesteem and contempt in a dictatorship... Socialist rationality becomes absurdity, socialist well-being becomes wretchedness if socialism is attained by a handful group of dictators resorting to dictatorial means: to force, instead of a well-educated, free and organized proletariat having recourse to democratic means and institutions.⁶⁵ Kautsky continues by stating that *every dictatorship is antagonistically opposed to democratic socialism*, even if it originates with a proletarian party.^{65/a} Kautsky's conclusion follows logically from such precepts. He writes that the social democrats must brace themselves if they desire to save their party, the proletariat and, what is more, mankind, from the worst of humiliation *prepared for them by rightist and leftist dictatorships alike*.⁶⁶

Similarly to Kautsky, Otto Bauer also opposed democracy to class force, i.e. dictatorship, in 1920 when he stated that "Democracy is a form of the state, under which the distribution of power in the state is exclusively determined by the social factors of the powers and not by force."^{66/a} (The mentioned social factors by him are: 1. number of members, 2. level of organization, 3. position in production and distribution, 4. activity, 5. education.)

The counterposing of democracy and dictatorship and the emphasizing of the opposition between bourgeois democracy and the dictatorship of the proletariat are also characteristic of the 1962 draft declaration of the Socialist International. First, this document writes in general about the tasks which should be realized under democracies irrespective of the class relations. Then, in the spirit of Kautsky, it explains the achievements of the socialist countries in the construction of a new society as follows: "The communist countries can only ensure this high rate of modernization and industrialization if they restrict or neglect the human rights of freedom." Considering the Soviet Union to be the main enemy of humanity, the draft declaration states that "...the one-party system of the Soviet Union is worse than any of the still existing tyrannies of

⁶⁵ K. Kautsky: *Kommunismus és szociáldemokrácia*. Communism and Social Democracy (In Hungarian), Budapest, 1933. p. 22.

^{65/a} Ibid. p. 22.

⁶⁶ Ibid. p. 28.

^{66/a} O. Bauer: *Bolschewismus oder Sozialdemokratie*. Wien. 1920, p. 109.

the world; it deprives its peoples of all those rights of freedom which constitute the essence of a really democratic society." One of the closing items of the declaration, which states that "we condemn the soulless despotism of communism", also expresses the stand against the socialist countries.^{66/b}

It is not by chance that we have dealt here in detail with the rightist opportunist views. Apart from the period that immediately followed the First World War when bourgeois counterrevolution used the slogan of "democracy" against the "dictatorship of the proletariat of bolshevism", it is relatively less characteristic nowadays of bourgeois political literature to counterpose, theoretically, democracy and dictatorship. However, even today, one of the main points of rightist reformists and revisionists is still this. It is with this that they take part in the anti-communist ideological campaign directed primarily, towards the non-proletarian masses of the population. In the "advertising" of democracy in general, Lenin's observations are sure to play a role. He wrote about this as follows: "...faith in 'democracy' in general, as a universal panacea, and failure to understand that his democracy is bourgeois democracy, historically limited in its usefulness and its necessity, have for decades and centuries been particularly characteristic of the petty bourgeoisie of all countries. The big bourgeois is case-hardened; he knows that under capitalism a democratic republic, like every other form of state, is nothing but a machine for the suppression of the proletariat. The big bourgeois knows this from his most intimate acquaintance with the real leaders and with the most profound (and therefore frequently the most concealed) springs of every bourgeois state machine. The petty bourgeois, owing to this economic position and his conditions of life generally, is less able to appreciate this truth, and even cherishes the illusion that a democratic republic implies "pure democracy", "a free people's state", the non-class, or supra-class rule of the people, and so on and so forth. The tenacity of these prejudices of the petty-bourgeois democrat is inevitably due to the fact that he is farther removed from the acute class struggle, the stock exchange, and "real" politics"^{66/c}

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^{66/b} Quotes from "The Perspectives of the Socialist Movement". *Die Zukunft*, January, 1962.

^{66/c} V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 28. pp. 188—189.

The counterposing of "pure", "dictatorship-free" democracy in general to "pure", i.e. "democracy-free" (antidemocratic) dictatorship in general, is mistaken and unscientific. It is mistaken because in society there are no or only exceptional 'pure' phenomena. And it is also mistaken because it counterposes the notion of *abstract democracy to concrete dictatorship*, that of the proletariat, without, however, clarifying what contradiction there could exist between them at all. Namely, a concept of democracy *not at all related to class interests* can by no means be contradictory to the dictatorship of the proletariat which expresses class interests.

The study of social facts proves that *neither democracy nor dictatorship are purposes in themselves*, but both of them are phenomena which *serve the interests of definite social groups*. The question is whose dictatorship is opposed to whose democracy, and whose democracy to whose dictatorship? History has proved that both democracy and dictatorship bear class characteristics. Consequently, the opposition between democracy and dictatorship derives from the class content implied in them. Hence, democracy is no longer "pure democracy" or "democracy in general", but bourgeois democracy, and it is just its bourgeois content which puts it into opposition with the dictatorship of the proletariat which is a different type of power. It was on the basis of these facts that Lenin wrote that "...we cannot speak of 'pure democracy' as long as different classes exist; we can only speak of class democracy. (Let us say in parenthesis that 'pure democracy' is not only an ignorant phrase, revealing a lack of understanding both of the class struggle and of the nature of the state, but also a thrice-empty phrase, since in communist society democracy will wither away in the process of changing and becoming a habit, but will never be 'pure' democracy.) 'Pure democracy' is the mendacious phrase of a liberal who wants to fool the workers. History knows of bourgeois democracy, which takes the place of feudalism, and of proletarian democracy, which takes the place of bourgeois democracy."^{66/d}

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The fascist take-over in Germany and Italy seemed to offer another proof for the theories regarding democracy and dictatorship as opposites. Of all types of fascism it is characteristic that it is autocratic, tyrannical and it applies terror against its adversaries. The regime openly declares

^{66/d} V. I. Lenin: Ibid. p. 242.

its contempt and hatred for democracy and it uses all its means to fight the democratic exercise of power. Based on this, it seems to be evident that fascism is identified with dictatorship and (bourgeois) democracy with democracy. This is coupled with stating that this is yet another manifestation of the opposition between dictatorship and democracy. It is not by coincidence that after fascism's emergence liberal and other anti-fascist theories set forward this tenet. It is not by chance that after the victory of the anti-fascist coalition the term dictatorship had become so to say identical with tyranny, indeed fascist tyranny.

The procedure in which the contradiction of fascism and bourgeois democracy is conceived of as the opposition of dictatorship in the general sense, with democracy in the general sense, is erroneous firstly because it identifies one of the excessive forms of the dictatorial exercise of power, fascist tyranny, with the dictatorial exercise of power. Namely, fascism is not the only form of the dictatorial exercise of power: in history dictatorial rule had often been realized through absolutist, bonapartist, i.e. other non-fascist forms. Secondly, this argumentation identifies the dictatorial exercise of power, i.e. one of the forms of rule with dictatorship in the abstract sense, with the absolute power of one class. Finally, this argumentation is erroneous also because it is only through the loosening of the content of bourgeois liberal democracy that it can suppose democracy. Furthermore, the abstract concept of the other opposite, i.e. that of dictatorship, can arise only through the concealment of the links of fascism with the ultra-reactionary bourgeois circles still representing bourgeois class interest.

However convincing the generally discussed opposition of (bourgeois) democracy and (fascist) dictatorship may seem, this thinking conceals the real contradictions and the true class content of fascism.

The dictatorial exercise of power of fascism and that of bourgeois democracy are two forms of rule by the same class. Their seeming contradiction does not entail genuine class contents, but a contrast within the rule of the bourgeois. In this opposition, the rule of the liberal bourgeoisie is opposed to ultra-conservative monopoly capitalist power interests. This contrast expresses the contradiction between two types of bourgeois class rule based on class compromise, as well as a type based on confrontation and open oppression.

Naturally, the fact that these two types of rule are both exercised by the bourgeoisie does not eliminate their differences. Bourgeois democracy provides the most favourable ground for the struggle for liberation

fought by the working people and the working class, whereas fascism provides the worst possible conditions for this struggle. However, this difference should not be conceived of as the opposition of democracy and dictatorship taken in the abstract sense. By doing this, progressive forces would use a wrong view of orientation and they could misunderstand the consequences of their victory.

While it would make no sense and it would be erroneous to contrast dictatorship as the absolute power of a given class with democracy as a form of the exercise of power, the dictatorial exercise of power realized by certain classes at various periods of history means a form of rule different from democracy. Based on this, the dictatorial and democratic forms of the exercise of power may be compared.

However, when some bourgeois, petty-bourgeois and social democratic thinkers and philosophers contrast democracy and dictatorship in their abstract meanings, then they do not distinguish the various modes of realization of democratic or dictatorial rule, but they oppose a democracy conceived of in abstract terms and declared as attractive and a dictatorship taken in the abstract sense and declared as negative, the latter being identified with tyranny, the usurpation of power. Through this, this opposition becomes a means of manipulation. This conceals the fact that 1. in all periods of history (since the emergence of class rule) it is the absolute power of the ruling class that is asserted; 2. it conceals the fact which class is in power against which class; 3. and it creates the illusion that democracy is not identical with the rule of one class but with the rule of the "people" and all members of society taken in the general sense.

In modern societies, there are only two basic class dictatorships, that of the bourgeoisie and that of the proletariat. "...the alternative is either the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie or the dictatorship of the working class", said Lenin in 1919 at the extraordinary plenary meeting of the Moscow soviet, and then he continued: "...only one or the other of these two systems of government is possible—either the absolute power of the working class, or the absolute power of the bourgeoisie—there can be no middle, or third, course".^{66/e}

The dictatorship of the bourgeoisie means the rule of the minority over the majority, i.e. over the working people, and it is to ensure the undisturbed maintenance of this exploiting system.

^{66/e} V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 29. Moscow, 1965, p. 262.

As Marx, Engels and Lenin have emphasized, the dictatorship of the proletariat is a new type of power brought about and maintained by the vanguard of the workers, by the working class in order to build up socialism. "Proletarian dictatorship is similar to the dictatorship of other classes in that it arises out of the need, as every other dictatorship does, to forcibly suppress the resistance of the class that is losing its political sway," stated Lenin and he immediately added that it is a new type of class oppression different from all the earlier forms: "The fundamental distinction between the dictatorship of the proletariat and the dictatorship of other classes—landlord dictatorship in the Middle Ages and bourgeois dictatorship in all the civilised capitalist countries—consists in the fact that the dictatorship of the landowners and the bourgeoisie was the suppression of the resistance offered by the vast majority of the population, namely, the working people. In contrast proletarian dictatorship is the forcible suppression of the resistance of the exploiters, i.e., an insignificant minority of the population, the landowners and capitalists."^{66/f}

The dictatorship of the proletariat is the workers' power not shared with any other class. In this context, Lenin wrote that "Only the proletariat may dominate. But this is applied in one way to the small peasant, in another to the middle peasant, in another to the landowners, and in yet another to the petty bourgeois." But what does this domination mean?

"...the proletariat will set the pace... We shall have to settle a number of problems and make a number of agreements and technical assignments which we, as the ruling proletarian power, must know how to set... The class-conscious proletariat's job now is to appreciate that its domination does not mean carrying out all the tasks itself."^{66/g}

The question arises whether the above facts—namely, that dictatorship is directly based on force and is untrammelled by any laws, and what is more, that the dictatorship of the proletariat openly declares itself to be a power seized and maintained by using force against the bourgeoisie, a power beyond the law—do not mean that dictatorship is nothing but despotism which is diametrically opposed to democracy. It may be asked whether, on this basis, dictatorship does not preclude democracy.

Bourgeois and petty-bourgeois politicians and ideologists consider

^{66/f} V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 28. p. 464.

^{66/g} V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 28. pp. 214—215.

dictatorship, which is untrammelled by any law, contrary to democracy, which is characterized by lawfulness. Unfortunately, this view was supported by the infringement of laws during the personality cult period, and these instances were often explained as the necessary and natural concomitants of dictatorship, an authority which is untrammelled by any law.

In fact, the scientific definition of dictatorship provides no theoretical foundation for the arbitrary infringement of lawfulness. What does it express then? It expresses that dictatorship, as the means and manifestation of a given class's power, *is in direct relationship with class interests* which it serves in an effective way and *for the realization of which it uses open class struggle and regular coercion, too.*

Dictatorship is the absolute power of a given class that realizes it *by any means*. Dictatorship expresses the *decision* and *practice* of the ruling class, aimed to employ all the available means and forces in order to make use of the existing conditions advantageous for the ruling class in a possibly *rational* and *purposeful* way from the point of view of its class interests. The scientific definition of dictatorship also expresses that the ruling class, in order to ensure the optimal satisfaction of its interests, is able to make use of all the means at its disposal, including here force too, *without any restriction* whatever, and it is not only able to, but will actually do so.

Naturally, it does not follow necessarily that a class must always employ all the means and forces and make use of all the available opportunities in order to ensure its power. In the 'normal' periods of class rule, i.e. in a relatively stable social system, this is usually not needed. In these periods, the regime is not threatened by significant masses, while its most conscious enemies who are actively opposing it know, or if they do not know, they will experience, that any significant step against the regime might be forcefully suppressed. Under such conditions, dictatorship needs the use of only some of the means available, and usually within the limits of legality.

The situation is completely different in the crisis periods of a regime. On these occasions, all means and forces are made use of without any restriction.

The statement that dictatorship is an authority based on force and untrammelled by any law only expresses the fact that the ruling class places its class interests above anything else and that the purposeful realization of its endeavours stands beyond any formal legality. It was in

this sense that Lenin said that "... he is a poor revolutionary who at a time of acute struggle is halted by the immutability of a law. In a period of transition laws have only a temporary validity; and when a law hinders the development of the revolution, it must be abolished or amended."⁶⁷

And if there is no such law that could safeguard the given interest, then the ruling class does not wait until such a law is created, but decides on the *actions to be taken* in the given situation *on the basis of its revolutionary (or counterrevolutionary) purposes*.

Such a situation may emerge when a class has just seized power and has not had time yet to codify its revolutionary results. Lenin referred to this situation when he said after the October Revolution that "Having repealed the laws of the deposed governments, the Party gives the judges elected by Soviet electors the slogan: enforce the will of the proletariat, apply its decrees, and in the absence of a suitable decree, or if the relevant decree is inadequate, take guidance from your socialist sense of justice, ignoring the laws of the deposed governments."⁶⁸

Such a situation may, however, also occur in case of classes ruling for a long time, since they cannot 'foresee' every event of the class struggle and, hence, they cannot prepare laws for regulating everything concretely. Sometimes the ruling class might also be limited in optimally asserting its interests by its own earlier laws. Actually, we witness this phenomenon in the era of imperialism. In the course of exercising its power, the capitalist class makes sometimes formal its own legality or even disregards it, and the number of instances for this has been increasing. Engels called attention to it already at that time: "The parties of Order, as they call themselves, are perishing under the legal conditions created by themselves. They cry despairingly with Odilon Barrot: ... legality is the death of us; ... Meanwhile they make new laws against overthrows ... Let them, nevertheless, put through their anti-overthrow bills, make them still worse, transform the whole penal law into india-rubber, they will gain nothing but new proof of their impotence ... They can cope with the Social Democratic overthrow, which just now is doing so well by keeping the law, only by an overthrow on the part of the parties of Order, an overthrow which cannot live without breaking the law."⁶⁹

⁶⁷ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 27. Moscow, 1965, p. 519.

⁶⁸ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 29. p. 131.

⁶⁹ K. Marx and F. Engels: *Selected Works in Three Volumes*. Vol. 1. Moscow, 1969, p. 202.

The bourgeois state, if its class objectives make it necessary, disregards the laws, that is, it actually exercises class dictatorship.

However, the bourgeoisie conceals its dictatorship by using slogans relating to democracy and expressing an anti-dictatorship stand. Furthermore, this dictatorship differs from that of the proletariat in that it realizes the oppression of the great majority, of the workers, or sometimes it even outlaws them, in order to safeguard the interests of the minority, of the bourgeoisie. But the bourgeoisie does not want to admit it. That is why bourgeois politicians, ideologists and propagandists have to obscure this fact and speak of their rule as democratic which is contradictory to every kind of dictatorship. And it is from here that their anti-proletarian dictatorship stand follows. What can be and what should be the relation of conscious workers to bourgeois dictatorship? Obviously, there is only one solution: they must count with it as a historical reality. Hence, they must reveal that bourgeois rule is also a dictatorship and must point out that this dictatorship safeguards and asserts the interests of the bourgeoisie. It also follows from this, that they must fight against this dictatorship, but not for the unreal objective of a 'dictatorship-free democracy', but for the dictatorship of the proletariat which prepares the abolition of every kind of dictatorship. (It should be mentioned here that the dictatorship of the proletariat may be preceded by a transitional phase which Lenin called workers'—peasants' democratic dictatorship in his work *Two Tactics* and which was denoted in Eastern Europe in 1944—1945 as 'people's democratic' phase.) The revolutionaries of the working-class movement have always acknowledged that this can be the only right attitude towards bourgeois dictatorship. At the beginning of this century, Frank, one of the revisionist representatives of German social democracy, became indignant at Minister von Bodman's (Baden) view that he refused to acknowledge that the Social Democratic Party enjoyed rights equal to other—bourgeois—parties. Frank was lectured by Bebel at the party congress of Magdeburg in the following way: "If the minister of a modern state, a representative of the existing state system and social order—and the purpose of the present-day state, as a political institution, is to defend and support the existing state system and social order against all attacks from the Social-Democratic camp, to defend it by force too in case of need—if such a minister declares that he does not recognise parity of rights of the Social Democrats, then he is quite right from his own point of view.' . . . 'I find this quite natural.' " Then he continued: "We could not be 'affronted' . . . by the Anti-Socialist Law; we were

filled with anger and hatred, 'and if it had been in our power at that time, we would have flung ourselves into battle, as we were longing to do heart and soul, we would have smashed to smithereens everything that stood in our path' 'We would have been traitors to our case not to have done so' 'But it was not our power.' " Explaining Frank's and Bebel's viewpoints, Lenin writes: "Why was Frank so indignant? Because he is thoroughly imbued with faith in bourgeois 'legality', in bourgeois 'parity of rights', without understanding the historical *limits* of this legality, without understanding that all this legality *must* inevitably be cast to the four winds when the fundamental and cardinal question of the preservation of bourgeois property is affected. Frank is steeped in petty-bourgeois constitutional illusions; that is why he does not understand the historical *conditionality* of constitutional institutions Bebel brings down the question from these constitutional illusions, which are characteristic of bourgeois democrats, to the firm realities of the class struggle. Can we allow ourselves to be 'affronted' because we, the enemies of the whole bourgeois order, are not accorded parity of rights on the basis of bourgeois law by a champion of this order? . . . I take it as an affront that a constitutional minister does not recognise the parity of rights of the socialists, argues Frank. You must not be affronted, says Bebel, because your parity of rights has been denied by a man who not so long ago was startling you, riding roughshod over all 'principles', whose duty it was to strangle you in defence of the bourgeois order, who will put a stranglehold on you tomorrow We would have been traitors if, having the opportunity, we had not throttled these enemies of the proletariat." Then, Lenin adds: "Two worlds of ideas: on the one hand, the point of view of the proletarian class struggle, which in certain historical periods can proceed on the basis of bourgeois legality, but which leads *inevitably* to a denouncement, . . . either 'smash' the bourgeois state 'to smithereens' or be defeated and strangled. On the other hand, the point of view of the reformist, the petty bourgeois who . . . cannot, through the tinsel of constitutional legality, see the fierce class struggle."⁷⁰

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As we have already stated it, *dictatorship* means the exercise of power—usually unrestricted by any law—in order to ensure the optimal assertion of the class interest. This, however, *does not mean that dictatorship is by its essence contrary to all laws and legality*. The everyday exercise of

⁷⁰ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 16. Moscow, 1963, pp. 306—307.

power demands the expression of the will of the ruling class in laws and the corresponding legal procedures. It is the dictatorship of the ruling class that is expressed in the legally regulated order as well as in the occasional extraordinary procedures, the cases of which are not regulated by laws. Especially when the social system is stable, dictatorship is mostly practised within the framework of legality. Once the laws expressing and regulating dictatorship have been made, it is just *legality, i.e. keeping to these laws*, that can ensure the effective assertion of the given class's rule without any contingencies, extemporizations and arbitrariness. Thus, in most cases—seemingly contrary to the original definition of dictatorship—the following paradox holds true: dictatorship can essentially fulfil its main functions in an optimal way if it is regulated by the laws of the ruling class. How much this is true is also proven by the practice of the personality cult. Namely, the infringements of legality and of the Marxist-Leninist norms and rules of how to build the party and the state—which were often arbitrarily justified by the argument that the definition of dictatorship includes the non-observance of laws—had serious consequences: they led to the crisis of socialism, of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Dictatorship is not essentially contrary to legality.

In the course of exercising class dictatorship, it sometimes may and does occur that for the assertion of its dictatorship, the new ruling class makes use of one or another law of the earlier regime. It is well known, for example, that in England certain demonstrations have been tried, under the pretext of 'holding up the traffic', on the basis of the feudal laws relating to 'waylaying'. That is, relation to old laws depends on the extent to which they serve the optimal assertion of the class interest. It is conceivable that the ruling class of the socialist revolution does not smash all the forms of bourgeois legality but, filling them with new social content, it makes use of certain laws and rules in the interest of its own power. For example, in the early 1950's, several of the politically unreliable persons who belonged to the bourgeoisie or the earlier political leadership were forced to leave the capital city of Budapest on the basis of a deportation decree created at the beginning of the century against the socialists. As we have already mentioned, in countries where democratic rights are widespread, the bourgeoisie stands threatened to be killed by its own legality even when it is in power. On the other hand, in the course of socialist revolution, some of the earlier laws of the bourgeoisie are usually used against its members. In the strategy of some of

the Western Communist Parties a peaceful road to socialism is envisaged, which observes the existing framework of constitutionality. Certain historical examples indicate the viability of this concept (cf. the takeover of Hungarian Communists and Socialists in 1919 and the historical development in Eastern Europe after World War II).

During the revolution and in the period immediately following it, the victorious class may rule by dictatorship without any legal restraint since in the course of the revolution it brings about new forms and organizations which do not, because they cannot, rest on the legality of the former regime.

Analysing the 1905 revolution in one of his articles written in 1906 entitled *The Victory of the Cadets and the Task of the Workers' Party*, Lenin stated that during this revolution the people employed such forms of creative activity which were unknown to political practice thus far: "1. the 'seizure' by the people of political liberty—its exercise without any rights and laws, without any limitations . . . ; 2. the creation of new organs of *revolutionary authority*", the soviets and the rural and town authorities which were organs of power. "They acted as a government when, for example, they seized printing plants . . . and arrested police officials who were preventing the revolutionary people from exercising their rights They acted as a government when they appealed to the whole people to withhold money from the old government. They confiscated the old government's funds . . . and used them for the needs of the new, people's government." 3. The people used force against its tyrants—Lenin writes when he characterizes the events of the revolution, and then he evaluates them as follows: "In their social and political character, they were the rudiments of the dictatorship of the revolutionary elements of the people The organs of authority that we have described represented a dictatorship in embryo, for they recognised no other authority, *no law and no standards, no matter by whom established.*"⁷¹

And we can add that these authorities were not able to effect legal regulation in every field in such a short time. Consequently, they had to take such measures and effect such rules which were based on the revolutionary sense of justice, on the interpretation of the interests of the people and the new revolutionary power serving it as well as on revolutionary necessity. In other words, they had to exercise dictatorship, a power which was neither sanctioned nor restricted by any laws.

⁷¹ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*, Vol. 10, pp. 243—244.

Finally, it is incorrect to identify dictatorship with power restricted exclusively by law—and it is more correct to characterize it as power unrestricted by any rules—also because the class power expressed in it is asserted not only by way of laws but also through social means.

It is also characteristic of dictatorship that the ruling class gives preferences to its allied classes and strata while it oppresses the enemy classes and strata. This very same method is applied also by classes that rise to power in the course of a revolution, both during the revolution and in the period following victory. This again refers to the fact that dictatorship is usually not characterized by being restricted by laws or other legal measures. Whether laws are kept to or not depends on the given circumstances.

Dictatorship means the power of the ruling class based directly on force and exercised against other classes and social strata. During *the whole time* of a class's rule, dictatorship characterizes the exclusive power of this class. But the way in which dictatorship is exercised may differ depending on the historical circumstances, on the class power relationships. When a regime is stable, dictatorship may be very slight, restricted almost exclusively to 'legal', usual, every-day forms. However, when class struggle is sharpening, dictatorship can only be exercised by way of using extraordinary and extreme regulations which may even assume the form of civil war, and within this, terror. The terror of the English bourgeoisie in 1649 or that of the French bourgeoisie in 1793, which they used against the feudal class in order to suppress the attempts at aristocratic restoration, well prove the fact that *the exploiting classes also employed terror when they saw their power threatened, and this does not only apply to the past, but to the present and the future too if their holding their power is in question.*

After the Great October Socialist Revolution, when the young soviet power was waging its life-and-death struggle, the socialist state was forced to employ even the most extreme form of dictatorship, viz. terror, in order to defend the dictatorship of the proletariat. "This state of affairs forced us to make a ruthless struggle and use of terrorist methods of warfare . . .," said Lenin. "We knew perfectly well it was necessitated by the acute Civil War They used all kinds of methods against us—civil war, bribery and sabotage. It was these conditions that necessitated the terror. Therefore, we should not repent nor renounce it."⁷² Lenin

⁷² V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 28. pp. 207—208.

sharply refused the bourgeoisie's and the counter-revolutionary politicians' statements against the red terror which, he explained, was a reaction to the counter-revolutionary terror of the whites effected during the same period. In one of his speeches Lenin said that the counter-revolutionaries, the servants of the bourgeoisie "... accuse us of resorting to terror The British bourgeoisie have forgotten their 1649, the French bourgeoisie have forgotten their 1793. Terror was just and legitimate when the bourgeoisie resorted to it for their own benefit against feudalism. Terror became monstrous and criminal when the workers and poor peasants dared to use it against the bourgeoisie! Terror was just and legitimate when used for the purpose of substituting one exploiting minority for another exploiting minority. Terror became monstrous and criminal when it began to be used for the purpose of overthrowing every exploiting minority, to be used in the interests of the vast actual majority, in the interests of the proletariat and semi-proletariat, the working class and the poor peasants!"⁷³

Dictatorship embodying the power of the ruling class *lasts from the class's rising to power till it remains in power*. Consequently, the various stages or forms of dictatorship in which it is 'more peaceful', 'more legal' or 'more usual' may not be interpreted as the lack of dictatorship, as the periods in which more extreme and extraordinary regulations are resorted to may not be—*par excellence*—interpreted as *the dictatorship* or as *the 'introduction' to dictatorship*. The *fact* of dictatorship and its *momentary concrete form* depending on social circumstances are two different things. The first one is the *general, lasting and necessary concomitant of every kind of class rule*, and in this sense it is to some extent independent of the specific circumstances prevailing in a country, while the second one, viz. the way in which dictatorship is exercised, always *depends on the existing conditions*.

It is even more incorrect to characterize—as the bourgeois ideologists do—the 'more peaceful', 'tamer', 'more legal' forms of bourgeois dictatorship based on stability and not on circumstances of a crisis period, as 'democracy' (i.e. as a rule free from dictatorship), and to counterpose it to the forms and regulations of the necessary self-defence of the socialist or other progressive regimes that are carrying on their life-and-death struggle.

⁷³ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 28, p. 71.

The dictatorship of the exploiting classes and the dictatorship of the proletariat do not only differ in their class content, their orientation and functions but also as regards *the dictatorial character of exercising power*.

The exploiting classes must exercise their power against the vast majority of the population, against the working people. Thus, this power can only be maintained if the most ruthless forms of force are applied on a wide scale. That is why Lenin wrote the following: "Naturally, to be successful, such an undertaking as the systematic suppression of the exploited majority by the exploiting minority calls for the utmost ferocity and savagery in the matter of suppressing, it calls for seas of blood, through which mankind is actually wading its way in slavery, serfdom and wage labour."⁷⁴

It is but natural that this dictatorship can only be removed from the life of a society if the exploiting power is overthrown, if the exploiting system is completely smashed.

It is the socialist revolution which accomplishes this task by way of bringing about the rule of the working class. This is also dictatorship since, as Lenin wrote, "... during the *transition* from capitalism to communism suppression is *still* necessary".⁷⁵ But this dictatorship greatly differs from the suppression applied in the exploiting societies. Lenin makes it clear what this difference consists in. "The suppression of the minority of exploiters by the majority of the wage slaves of *yesterday* is comparatively so easy, simple and natural a task that it will entail far less bloodshed than the suppression of the rising of slaves, serfs or wage-labourers, and it will cost mankind far less. And it is compatible with the extension of democracy to such an overwhelming majority of the population that the need for a *special machine* of suppression will begin to disappear."⁷⁶

Although already in 1915—1916 he had laid down the theoretical foundations of the idea that the revolution could be victorious in one country, in 1917 in his work *The State and Revolution* as well as in some other works of his written in the same period Lenin expressed his view that the trend of revolution was rising and thus the dictatorship of the proletariat would be victorious in several developed countries at the same time. And, consequently, as the restoration of capitalism would thus

⁷⁴ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 25. p. 463.

⁷⁵ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 25. p. 463.

⁷⁶ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 25. p. 463.

become almost completely impossible, he continued his train of thought, the earlier exploiting classes, although they might resist for a time, will finally be forced by necessity to acknowledge the situation disadvantageous for them. This was the view on which he based his idea that dictatorship to be exercised against the bourgeoisie would be a comparatively easy task.

History, however, developed in a different way. In 1917 it was only in the Soviet Union that the socialist revolution was victorious. Workers' power was overthrown in a short time in Hungary, Bavaria, Slovakia, Finland and in the Baltic countries. World capitalism became stable around 1923 and thus the Soviet Union was faced with the capitalists of nearly the whole world and with other counter-revolutionaries, who not only attacked from outside but also roused and assisted the resistance of the overthrown exploiting classes on whom they relied in the civil war of 1918—1920 as well as later. It was this situation that made it absolutely necessary that, to use Lenin's words, "We had to exercise the dictatorship of the proletariat in its harshest form."⁷⁷

This situation, namely, that socialism was victorious only in one country against which all the powers of the old world allied, left its deep mark on the Soviet dictatorship of the proletariat and socialist construction for a long time.

Although after the Second World War the situation changed considerably to the advantage of socialist revolution, it is still a fact that the socialist countries' population constitute a smaller part of the world and economically they have not yet attained the development level of the developed capitalist countries. The big imperialist powers have been making efforts to soften up the socialist countries politically and ideologically and, in the end, to restore in them the exploiting relations. These efforts are supported by some economic and other difficulties, or occasionally by definite mistakes. Under such circumstances, the exercise of proletarian dictatorship invariably remains a difficult task.

However, the dictatorship of the proletariat does not only mean force—as Lenin also emphasized it many times, and he stressed that the *essence* of the dictatorship of the proletariat is the construction of socialism. "The dictatorship of the proletariat is an inevitable, essential and absolutely indispensable means of emerging from the capitalist system," he stated, for example, at the first All-Russian Conference on education

⁷⁷ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 207.

outside schools, then he added: "Dictatorship does not mean only force, although it is impossible without force, but also a form of the organisation of labour superior to the preceding form."⁷⁸

He expounded the same idea in details in his greetings to the Hungarian workers as follows: "... the essence of proletarian dictatorship is not in force alone, or even mainly in force. Its chief feature is the organisation and discipline of the advance contingent of the working people, of their vanguard; of their sole leader, the proletariat, whose object is to build socialism This object cannot be achieved at one stroke. It requires a fairly long period of transition from capitalism to socialism, because the reorganisation of production is a difficult matter, because radical changes in all spheres of life need time, and because the enormous force of habit of running things in a petty-bourgeois and bourgeois way can only be overcome by a long and stubborn struggle. That is why Marx spoke of an entire period of the dictatorship of the proletariat as the period of transition from capitalism to socialism."⁷⁹

The fact that the socialist power relies on the workers, on the majority of the population in exercising its dictatorship and that it has extremely extended democracy makes it possible for its dictatorship to solve, in a relatively short time, its primary tasks, namely, the abolition of the exploiting classes, the formation of the working classes to become socialist and the accomplishment of constructing a socialist society. By this, however, such a situation has come about in which—as regards the internal relations of socialist societies—"... there is *nobody* to be suppressed—'nobody' in the sense of a *class*, of a systematic struggle against a definite section of the population."⁸⁰

There are no longer any significant social groups in the socialist countries against which the optimal execution of the construction of communism should be protected, there are no longer any greater groups who would query the social leading role of the working class. That is, it is no longer necessary for the working class to remain the sole possessor of power and, as a class, to suppress regularly and in an organized way another class or significant social group within the socialist country.

This situation was expressed in the programme accepted at the 22nd Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The Programme

⁷⁸ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 29. p. 373.

⁷⁹ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 29. p. 388.

⁸⁰ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 25. p. 464.

stresses that dictatorship of the proletariat has played a world-historical role: it assured the victory of socialism in the Soviet Union. "... The dictatorship of the proletariat has assured the full and ultimate victory of socialism, it has assured the transition of the society to the ever-expanding construction of communism. Since it fulfilled its historical mission, it is no more necessary in the Soviet Union *from the viewpoint of realizing the tasks of the country's internal development*. The state, which came into being as the state of the dictatorship of the proletariat, has been transformed in the current phase of development into a universal people's state, a state representing the interests and will of the whole people."⁸¹

While the dictatorship of the exploiting classes must be crushed by force, the dictatorship of the proletariat—after accomplishing its tasks—will wither away in a peaceful and almost unperceivable way, and then the earlier internal tasks of dictatorship will become—even in the worst case—only governmental tasks that can be realized by way of applying state coercion.

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We have reviewed the various references of the Marxist interpretation of dictatorship. As it turned out: *dictatorship means the absolute power of a class over other classes and its use of regular force against them*. Let us sum up here the characteristics of the dictatorship of the proletariat which is a specific type of dictatorship: 1. it is the rule, the hegemony, of the working class unshared with any other classes, i.e., the working class has the leading role; 2. it is the alliance of the working class with non-proletarian elements; 3. it means class oppression; and 4. it involves the construction of a new society which comprehends every field of social life and covers a whole historical period.

It should be clear also from the characteristics of dictatorship how incorrect it is to counterpose democracy and dictatorship. *Dictatorship is the total rule of a given class covering the whole of society as well as a historical period, and is characterized by a definite class power and by a definite form of government and a definite state system. Democracy is a form of state, a form of government, i.e. one of the possible alternatives of the given state system. That is, democracy and dictatorship are categories*

⁸¹ 22nd Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (In Hungarian) Budapest, 1962, p. 797. (Italics are mine—A. K.) For a more detailed analysis of the issue cf. the author's book: *A szocialista állam és kritikussai* (The Socialist State and its Critics). Budapest, 1966.

expressing different relations of social life, they are not organically linked, they are not opposites and they cannot be in real contradiction. *Also their functions differ*, namely, dictatorship is the assertion of power of a given class by any means, while democracy is one of the possible expressions of this, and thus it is a form subordinate to the above 'content'. That is why Lenin, when writing about workers' power, emphasized that "The dictatorship of the proletariat, the proletarian state, which is a machine for the suppression of the bourgeoisie by the proletariat, is not a 'form of governing', but a *state of a different type*".⁸² That is why he was against any kind of counterposing of democracy in general and the dictatorship of the proletariat: a state system can only be compared to another state system and not to a form of state which might be one of the forms of various state systems. And that is why he stressed over and over again that it was improper to counterpose a state system, i.e. the dictatorship of the proletariat, only one side of which (viz. force) was always and exclusively emphasized, with democracy 'in general', viz. to bourgeois democracy, shown as the attractive rule of 'legality', 'freedom' and 'equality'. 'Abstract democracy' has never existed and cannot exist at all in reality. This term has only been used to conceal bourgeois dictatorship. That is why Lenin said that "... we shall not allow ourselves to be deceived by such high-sounding slogans as freedom, equality and the will of the majority and ... we shall treat as aiders and abettors of Kolchak those who call themselves democrats, adherents of pure democracy, adherents of consistent democracy and who, directly or indirectly, oppose it to the dictatorship of the proletariat".⁸³

2.3.2. On the Relationship between Democracy and Dictatorship

It should be clear from the above that dictatorship does not exclude democracy theoretically, that *from dictatorship, the negation of democracy does not follow*.

History has proven that dictatorship might always be compatible with democracy. First of all, class power *may* assume a democratic form (although it does not necessarily do so) in the exploiting societies. "... rebellions, or even strong ferment, among the slaves in ancient

⁸² V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 28. pp. 107—108.

⁸³ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 29. p. 351.

times at once revealed the fact that the ancient state was essentially a *dictatorship of the slaveowners*. Did this dictatorship abolish democracy *among*, and *for*, the slaveowners? Everybody knows that it did not," states Lenin,⁸⁴ and then he goes on saying that "... dictatorship does not necessarily mean the abolition of democracy for the class that exercises the dictatorship over other classes".⁸⁵

The reader might be astonished at Lenin's formulation. Namely, under modern social relations it is a widely spread notion that the dictatorship of a class over another *necessarily entails* democracy within the ruling class. The following statement has almost become a commonplace: 'dictatorship exercised over one class means at the same time democracy for the other.'

Lenin was much more cautious in formulating his sentence. According to it, democracy is *one of the possible, but not necessarily asserted forms* of exercising class dictatorship. Dealing with ancient slave societies, he states that already in ancient Greece and Rome different forms of state could be found: monarchy, which is the negation of every state power based on voting; aristocratic governing, which was the form of rule of a relatively tiny minority of the free people; and democracy, which was a form of state based on the legal equality of the free people. The situation was similar in the Middle Ages. In modern societies, it is again not only democracy that can be found, but also various other forms of state which ensure various opportunities of participation for the ruling class. *Consequently, democracy is not the inevitably necessary form of rule of the dictatorship of the exploiting societies.*

Where does the thesis 'there is no dictatorship without democracy' or 'it is dictatorship for one class and democracy for the other' come from and why is it so widespread? This statement, in such a general formulation, can be found neither with Marx, nor with Engels, nor with Lenin; consequently, it is not the authentic view of Marxism-Leninism. Still, it seems to be Marxist for many people and, accordingly, it is very often mentioned. This semblance might stem from the fact that Lenin's criticisms of bourgeois democracy and his theses on socialist democracy often treat democracy and dictatorship as related concepts. As it is known, on criticizing bourgeois democracy, Lenin pointed out that it was democracy for the bourgeoisie and dictatorship for the workers. When

⁸⁴ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 28. p. 235.

⁸⁵ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 28. p. 235.

writing about socialist democracy of the time, he stated that it was the workers' dictatorship against the exploiters and, at the same time, the widest democracy for the workers. Most probably, it is from the incorrect generalization of these theses that the erroneous notion originates according to which every dictatorship is at the same time democracy and every democracy is at the same time dictatorship, or in other words, 'there is no dictatorship without democracy' or 'there is no democracy without dictatorship'.

In the case of ancient Athens and Rome, the democratic Greek city states and the city states of the Middle Ages or in that of the bourgeois and socialist democracies this notion may hold true. But it cannot be generalized.

First, it is impossible theoretically, since in a given society there can be only one definite form of state. This may be democracy enjoyed primarily by the ruling class, while it is dictatorship for the oppressed class. However, if a non-democratic form is chosen, it means that the ruling class is exercising its power in a different way, perhaps only a small part of it is enjoying power (e.g. the oligarchs), while even more strong suppression is applied against the oppressed classes. Examples for this are the 20th-century fascist systems. Even if the members of no full rights of the ruling class enjoy more rights than the oppressed masses, it does not mean that this social system is democratic for them. It is a theoretical and logical nonsense that a form of state can have a dual character: for example, at the same time oligarchic and democratic.

Secondly, the generalizing thesis 'it is dictatorship for the one class and democracy for the other' is also erroneous because it contradicts the historical facts. Namely, not all of the class dictatorships in history have been asserted in a democratic way. For example, in the case of the class dictatorships of the slave and feudal societies, the democratic form of state was a rare exception (Athens, the Roman Republic and certain city states of the Renaissance period). Although with capitalism the number of democracies increased, the existence of fascist, semi-fascist systems and of military dictatorships proves that democracy has not even become a general and solely typical form of state in capitalism either. Moreover, the increasing occurrence of the restrictions of democratic rights which tend to limit democracy prove that neither the bourgeoisie considers democracy to be the only possible form of its rule.

If the above-mentioned democratic forms of rule are realized, they are actually the forms of rule of the exploiting minority of the population.

Thus they are definitely dictatorships for the working majority, while they are really democracies for the ruling class or for a significant part of it.

However, history has shown that these democratic systems are mostly exceptions and the number of those systems in which class dictatorship is exercised in an aristocratic, oligarchic or other non-democratic form is much higher. And these—especially in the past—did not mean political and legal equality within the ruling class either, they were based on legal and political hierarchy (i.e. sub- and superordination), that is, they did not mean democracy for every member of the ruling class.

The dictatorship of the proletariat is the only consistently democratic system. As it is the power of the majority of the population, it is democracy by its *essence*. Furthermore, by ensuring the active participation of the working masses in the exercise of power, it is the *only consistent* democracy.

Thirdly, the generalizing theses ‘there is no dictatorship without democracy’, ‘there is no democracy without dictatorship’ or ‘it is democracy for the one class and dictatorship for the other’ are also erroneous because—and this is again a historical proof—with the coming into existence of the ‘all-peoples’ state in the Soviet Union, socialist democracy remained, moreover, was widened, while the dictatorship of the proletariat exercised within the Soviet Union ceased to exist as it was declared by the 22nd Congress of the CPSU.

Consequently, there is no relation between democracy and dictatorship which is always valid and is generally characteristic of every case.

Democracy for the minority presupposes and demands in every case dictatorship against the majority. However, *vice versa* this statement is not necessarily true. The dictatorship of the minority can not only be anti-democratic because the majority is exploited and suppressed but also because quite often there is a lack of democracy in relation to a part of the exploiters as well. The dictatorship of the majority implies the ensuring of democracy as an essential requirement—at least for the class or classes that exercise the dictatorship.⁸⁶

⁸⁶ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 28. p. 235. This fact makes it clear why it is in vain to try to make fascist dictatorship understandable and explainable on the basis of the conception “democracy for the ruling classes and dictatorship for those suppressed”. It is well known that this regime did not acknowledge the equality of the citizens either formally or in fact. The privileges of the ruling capitalist class, its dominating role in every field of society’s life remained uncurtailed. *Politically,*

The fact that in the exploiting societies dictatorship against the oppressed classes is not always accompanied with democracy for the ruling class does not, of course, mean that under the conditions of class dictatorship the ruling class is always deprived of democracy. It can be observed, especially in the capitalist societies, that if there are democratic rights—or at least these are formally declared—it is *primarily* the members of the ruling class who can make use of them, that is, democracy exists *essentially* and *primarily for them*.

But in the capitalist societies, the democratic way of exercising power ensures—at least formally—certain rights and opportunities not only for the ruling class but also for those who are suppressed by it, or rather, for a part of them, as a result of their class struggle and to the extent of their achievements in this struggle. How much of it is realized and made use of depends on the consciousness and activity, on the sacrifice and militancy of the working masses.

It turns out from the above that *class dictatorship, even if it is the power of the exploiting class, does not automatically exclude democracy*.

Unlike the dictatorship of the exploiters, *the dictatorship of the proletariat*, as a specific power embodying the rule of the working majority, is not accidentally or contingently, *but unconditionally and necessarily related to democracy*. As Lenin wrote it: "... socialism can be implemented only *through* the dictatorship of the proletariat, which combines the violence against the bourgeoisie, i.e., the minority of the population, with *full* development of democracy, i.e., the genuinely equal and genuinely universal participation of the *entire* mass of the population in all state affairs and in all the complex problems of abolishing capitalism."⁸⁷

Now, if we examine the problem from the aspect of democracy, it turns out that *democracy is neither diametrically opposed to dictatorship*

however, even the broad masses of the ruling class were barred from directly exercising power or directly influencing it. This must have been one of the reasons why a certain part of the capitalist class that was excluded from directly controlling political power—e.g. due to origin—took up a liberal—democratic stand against fascism. Internationally, the fact that the fascist regime impaired even the rights of a part of the ruling class contributed to the anti-fascist dictatorship attitude of certain leading circles in some western democracies. As it also turns out from the memoirs of some fascist leaders, democratic procedures were not even used in the uppermost leading circles. Hence, this type of dictatorship cannot at all be evaluated as a democracy for the ruling class.

⁸⁷ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 23. p. 25.

nor does it exclude the latter. This follows primarily from the fact that democracy as a form of state is the expression of class antagonisms. Although it is true that within the Soviet Union the dictatorship of the proletariat has become an 'all-peoples' dictatorship', this dictatorship continues to exist towards *outside*, that is, to combat the hostile actions of imperialism.

Democracy is not at all a guarantee against force, oppression and dictatorship, it is not at all the anti-thesis of these. This is so much obvious that it is not only Marxism, but also—as Marx referred to it—already Voltaire, the representative of bourgeois Enlightenment, acknowledged it: “‘Ce mot des *libertés*’, says Voltaire, ‘des *privilèges*, suppose l’assujettissement. Des *libertés* sont des *exemptions* de la *servitude générale*’.”= “This word *liberties*, of *privileges*, supposes subjection. *Liberties* are exemptions from the *general servitude*.”⁸⁸

Coercion, more precisely state coercion, always constitutes a necessary tool of democracy taken in the sense of a form of state. The coercion exercised by the state—laid down in laws and in regulations—expresses the class content of the given state system. It fixes, defends and asserts by its means the given character of democracy determined by this content. By way of legal and political regulation, it determines the forms, the ways and means in which this form of rule can be exercised. On the one hand, *the state and state coercion summarize and guarantee the democratic exercise of power and make the democratic processes tend to the right direction.* On the other hand, every democracy means the restriction of the freedom of action of certain groups of people and the prohibition of certain activities. Hence, *the state and state coercion are at the same time the legal expression of the limits of democracy* and they maintain the restrictions formed on this basis.

State coercion and democracy are in an indissoluble relation with each other. On the one hand, democracy means a definite part and form of state coercion; on the other hand, state coercion has a definite regulatory role. This close interrelationship between democracy and state coercion will only cease to exist with the withering away of the state, thus with that of the democratic form of state.

As we have already mentioned it, *in case of essential social issues state coercion against the oppressed classes assumes the form of dictatorship.* That is why Marx and Engels wrote in the *Communist Manifesto* that

⁸⁸ K. Marx and F. Engels: *Collected Works*. Vol. 1. Moscow, 1975, p. 178.

"... the proletariat must first of all acquire political supremacy..."⁸⁹ and that "... The first step in the revolution by the working class is to raise the proletariat to the position of ruling class, to win the battle of democracy".⁹⁰ Marx and Engels identified the rising of the proletariat to the position of a ruling class with the realization of democracy. Then they went on saying that "The proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralise all instruments of production in the hands of the State, i.e., of the proletariat organised as the ruling class; and to increase the total of productive forces as rapidly as possible."⁹¹

The power of the proletariat—this democratic form of rule—means at the same time dictatorship too. This was a natural and self-evident fact for both Marx and Engels. On dealing with the tasks of the workers' power, they state that initially the proletariat can only fulfil its task if it forcibly interferes in ownership as well as in capitalist production relations. And when it is a question of interfering in social relations, then democracy assumes a form of force that is outside the sphere of the economy. Furthermore, the dictatorship of democracy is also directed against the former ruling class. As Marx and Engels write it in the *Communist Manifesto*: "Political power, properly so called, is merely the organised power of one class for oppressing another. If the proletariat during its contest with the bourgeoisie is compelled, by the forces of circumstances, to organise itself as a class, if, by means of a revolution, it makes itself the ruling class, and, as such, sweeps away by force the old conditions of production, then it will, along with these conditions, have swept away the conditions for the existence of class antagonisms, and of classes generally, and will thereby have abolished its own supremacy as a class." Then, they also define the conditions for surpassing politics, political power: "When, in the course of development, class distinctions have disappeared, and all production has been concentrated in the hands of a vast association of the whole nation, the public power will lose its political character. ... In place of the old bourgeois society, with its classes and class antagonisms, we shall have an association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all."⁹²

⁸⁹ K. Marx and F. Engels: *Collected Works*. Vol. 6. Moscow, 1976, pp. 502—503.

⁹⁰ K. Marx and F. Engels: *Collected Works*. Vol. 6. p. 504.

⁹¹ K. Marx and F. Engels: *Collected Works*. Vol. 6. p. 504.

⁹² K. Marx and F. Engels: *Collected Works*. Vol. 6. pp. 505—506.

Let us also quote Lenin in this context who in his work *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky* writes as follows. "...[dictatorship] does mean the abolition (or very material restriction, which is also a form of abolition) of democracy for the class over which, or against which, the dictatorship is exercised."⁹³

It was on this basis that Lenin, when dealing with the democracy of the capitalist society, wrote the followings: "Under the bourgeois system . . . and under bourgeois democracy, 'freedom and equality' remain purely formal, signifying in practice *wage-slavery* for the workers (who are formally free and equal) and the *undivided rule of capital*, the oppression of labour by capital."⁹⁴ And in another place he states that the bourgeois state "... even if it is a democratic republic, is nothing but a machine used by the capitalists to suppress the workers, and the freer the state, the more clearly is this expressed."⁹⁵

In another writing of his, where he is dealing with the proletariat's power, Lenin also concretizes the above thought on the dictatorial side of democracy: "The indispensable characteristic, the necessary condition of dictatorship is the *forcible* suppression of the exploiters as a class, and, consequently, the infringement of 'pure democracy', i.e., of equality and freedom, *in regard to that class*."⁹⁶

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Democracy is a form of the state, denoting a way of exercising power, that is, it is a concept as well as a practice expressing specific content. The concrete forms of democracies have often changed and been different in the course of history. For example, there is a vast difference between the democracy of ancient Greece and today's bourgeois democracy.

Furthermore, the democracy characteristic of a given socio-economic formation can also show variations as regards both the historical development phases and the individual countries in the same development phase. It was these facts that Lenin expressed when he stated that "Democracy assumed different forms and was applied in different degrees".⁹⁷ And that is why Lenin said that "It would be a sheer nonsense that the most profound revolution in human history, the first case in the world of

⁹³ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 28. p. 235.

⁹⁴ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 29. p. 380.

⁹⁵ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 29. p. 487.

⁹⁶ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 28. p. 256.

⁹⁷ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 28. p. 464.

power being transferred from the exploiting minority to the exploited majority, could take place within the time-worn framework of the old, bourgeois, parliamentary democracy, without drastic changes, without the creation of new forms of democracy, new institutions that embody the new conditions for applying democracy, etc.”.⁹⁸

R. M. Mac Iver, the doyen of US politology, formulates similar statements when he writes: “Democracy, it is true, is a matter of degree, and lines are hard to draw here as elsewhere. But we would not, for example, refuse the title of democracy to a state because it leaves its women members politically unenfranchised, since women do not form a class politically distinct and may be regarded, though the view is of course inadequate, as represented indirectly through the male members of the family. Nor again would we deny the title of democracy to states which limit citizenship in terms of qualifications which can reasonably be considered as implying a minimum personal fitness for the discharge of civic responsibilities. Nor need we raise here the question of the reality of democratic control as it is affected by social and economic considerations which influence the ‘will of the people’. So long as the legislative sovereignty is formally determined by the exercise of the general will, no matter what influences impinge upon the latter, we shall call the state a democracy.”⁹⁹

Let us turn back to Lenin. From his statement that “democracy was applied in different degrees”, it follows that a democracy may be a “more democratic”, i.e. broader, or “less democratic”, i.e. narrower, form of rule, in which latter case democratic rights are restricted and the activity of the masses decreased. That is, *democracy is a specific political field of play which can be broadened or narrowed down and in which the various*

⁹⁸ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 28. p. 464.

⁹⁹ R. M. Mac Iver: *The Modern State*. Oxford University Press, 1964, p. 343. — The ideologists of the developed and politically relatively stable capitalist countries frequently express quite openly the principles, rules and practice of how the capitalists exercise their power and what their motivations are (this is especially so in books written for the inner circles of the ruling class, to which the work quoted above also belongs). So it was fully justified that Lenin wrote at the time that “The doctrine of the class struggle is something against which one can conceivably make an effort to argue in terms of (would-be) science. But one has only to approach the matter from a practical standpoint, to look closely at everyday realities, and behold! the most violent opponent of this doctrine can prove to be . . . gifted . . . advocate of the class struggle”. (V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 18. Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1963, p. 306.)

classes are struggling for the extension or the restriction of everyday democratic procedures.

It is generally characteristic of the exploiting classes that they are struggling for the realization or maintenance of such a political system which intends to narrow down the sphere of activity of the workers to the least possible. That is why Lenin wrote, for example in September 1917, that "Of course, the bourgeoisie stood for and will stand for a monarchy, because the cruder armed protection of capital by monarchist institutions is more obvious and 'closer' to all the capitalists and landowners. However, under a strong pressure 'from below', the bourgeoisie has always and everywhere 'reconciled' itself to a republic, as long as it could maintain its economic domination." Lenin has also explained why this form is advantageous for the bourgeoisie: "... economic domination is everything to the bourgeoisie, and the form of political domination is of very little importance; the bourgeoisie can rule just as well under a republic, in the sense that under a republican political order, no changes in the composition of the government or in the composition and the grouping of the ruling parties affect the bourgeoisie."¹⁰⁰

Democracy is of various degrees in capitalism. Hence, it cannot be immaterial for the working class, for the working masses what degree of development democracy has attained, that is, how large field of action is ensured for them by the existing political system. It is also clear, that the most conscious forces of the people must struggle for the possible "completion" of democracy, thereby creating more favourable conditions for their struggle. This struggle is not a hopeless undertaking. In his already quoted debate with Pyatakov, Lenin stated that there were a great number of political and economic "evils" in capitalism. "The difference lies in the fact that certain economic evils are part of capitalism as such, whatever the political superstructure, and that it is *impossible* to eliminate them economically without eliminating capitalism itself. ... On the other hand, political evils represent a departure from democracy which, economically, is fully possible 'on the basis of the existing system', i.e., capitalism."¹⁰¹ This means that the working class must already struggle for the extension of bourgeois democracy and that its democratic rights and sphere of political action depend on its own struggle, too.

¹⁰⁰ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 26. Moscow, 1964, p. 53.

¹⁰¹ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 23. pp. 71—72.

Lenin said the following about the limits to and procedures of struggle for democracy: "Capitalism and imperialism can be overthrown only by economic revolution. They cannot be overthrown by democratic transformation, even the most 'ideal'. But a proletariat not schooled in the struggle for democracy is incapable of performing an economic revolution. . . . The Marxist solution of the problem of democracy is for the proletariat to *utilise all* democratic institutions and aspirations in its class struggle against the bourgeoisie in order to prepare for its overthrow and assure its own victory."¹⁰²

In the light of the above ideas it may become clear how senseless and anti-Marxist are the statements of some contemporary pseudo-leftist groups, of the anarchists and those of Marcuse's followers, according to which the proletariat and its revolutionary organizations, because in the present phase of development they do not do voluntary actions nor do they take part in these, but instead they wage their struggle by optimally utilizing the opportunities provided within the framework of the bourgeois democratic systems, "have become opportunist" and "have been integrated" into the capitalist system. In the present phase of development and under the present conditions, that tactics is revolutionary which makes use of the opportunities provided by bourgeois democracy in a Marxist-Leninist way, utilizing them to promote the revolutionary transformation of society. Hence, repeating Lenin's words, it can be definitely stated that "It would be a radical mistake to think that the struggle for democracy was capable of diverting the proletariat from the socialist revolution, or of hiding, overshadowing it, etc. On the contrary, . . . [it] cannot prepare for its victory over the bourgeoisie without an all-round, consistent and revolutionary struggle for democracy."¹⁰³

The proletarian rule brings about a democracy which qualitatively differs from that of any class society by the fact that it develops and expands democracy for the exploited, for the workers to an extent that had never been experienced before. That is why Lenin, in the course of his debate with Kautsky, stated that those who do not notice or do not consider this fact do not decide on the questions of democracy from the point of view of the oppressed classes. Lenin might well ask the question: "Is there a single country in the world, even among the most democratic bourgeois countries, in which the *average rank-and-file* worker . . . or

¹⁰² V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 23. pp. 25—26.

¹⁰³ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 22. Moscow, 1964, p. 144.

village semi-proletarian generally (i.e., the representative of the oppressed, of the overwhelming majority of the population), enjoys anything approaching such *liberty* of holding meetings in the best buildings, such *liberty* of using the largest printing-plants and biggest stocks of paper to express his ideas and to defend his interests, such *liberty* of promoting men and women of his own class to administer and to 'knock into shape' the state, as in Soviet Russia?"¹⁰⁴

What Lenin stated was an absolute and unrefutable truth: "Proletarian democracy is *a million times* more democratic than any bourgeois democracy. . . ." ¹⁰⁵

Besides acknowledging the superiority of socialist democracy, we must immediately state that Lenin's thesis on the application of democracy in different degrees also relates to socialist democracy, to the problems of the form and content and the extent of this form of rule. This must be emphasized all the more since the fact that "proletarian democracy is a million times more democratic than any bourgeois democracy" has several times been interpreted by some Marxist politicians and theoreticians as if the superiority of socialist democracy would in itself solve, once and for ever, every problem of democracy and as if socialist democracy would not need any kind of development.

The new quality of socialist democracy cannot be an argument against its broadening and perfection. Socialist democracy is a changing, developing form of rule, within which democracy may be broader or narrower. This democratic exercising of power does not always adequately correspond to the given opportunities or to the requirements of socialist society. That is why socialist democracy must continually be perfected. The solution of these tasks, however, is facilitated under socialism by the lack of antagonisms, by the uniform social—political structure.¹⁰⁶

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As it turns out from the above, *dictatorship does not preclude democracy*, moreover, it may enable the ruling class to exercise its power more effectively. And *democracy does not preclude class dictatorship*, but is, instead, a form of manifestation of the latter. What we have said also testifies that the rule of the various classes actually realizes the various forms of democracy and dictatorship. In other words, democracy and

¹⁰⁴ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 28. p. 248.

¹⁰⁵ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 28. p. 248.

¹⁰⁶ These problems will be dealt with in detail in the subsequent chapters.

dictatorship are exercised in different forms, through different procedures and with different effectiveness under different power relations. That is, depending on which class is ruling, the relationship, viz. the ratio, between democracy and dictatorship will be different. That is why the major question is always "Whose (which class's) dictatorship against whom (which class)?" Or, "Whose democracy with whose restriction?" And that is why Lenin wrote, even before the Great October Socialist Revolution, that "Socialism demands that we distinguish between capitalist democracy and proletarian democracy, between bourgeois revolution and proletarian revolution, between a rising of the rich against the tsar and a rising of the working people *against the rich*."¹⁰⁷ Later, in the period following the socialist revolution, Lenin made it completely clear that under the new power relations the "condemnation of dictatorship" and the "defence of democracy" served as the most important arguments for justifying the rule of the exploiters. As he formulated it: "Firstly, this argument employs the concepts of 'democracy in general' and 'dictatorship in general', without posing the question of the class concerned. This non-class or above-class presentation, which supposedly is popular, is an outright travesty of the basic tenet of socialism, ... in no civilised capitalist country does 'democracy in general' exist; all that exist is bourgeois democracy and it is not a question of 'dictatorship in general', but of the dictatorship of the oppressed class, i.e. the proletariat, over its oppressors and exploiters, i.e. the bourgeoisie."¹⁰⁸

Hence, the exact clarification of the concepts 'democracy' and 'dictatorship' as well as their interrelation and class character is an important issue not only from the aspect of scientific research and theoretical perspicacity. The solution of this task may help reveal the essence of the slanders cast at the socialist system and scatter the illusions about the political relations of the capitalist system. Therefore, it is at the same time also an important task of political struggle for socialism.

2.4. Democracy and Freedom

In his notes collected under the title *Marxism on the State*—which was a preparatory work for *The State and Revolution*—and which contain Marx's and Engels's statements about the state as well as his comments

¹⁰⁷ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 24. Moscow, 1964, p. 548.

¹⁰⁸ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 28. p. 457.

on them, Lenin writes the following: "Usually the concepts 'freedom' and 'democracy' are considered identical and one is often used instead of the other. Very often, vulgar Marxists ... reason precisely in that way. In fact democracy precludes freedom. The dialectic (course) of development is as follows: from absolutism to bourgeois democracy; from bourgeois democracy to proletarian democracy; from proletarian democracy to none at all."¹⁰⁹ Lenin emphasizes that true Marxists are separated from opportunists by, among others, such deep and "'more eternal' truths" as is the idea "about the contradiction between state and freedom".¹¹⁰

Hence, Lenin formulates two fundamental theses in his above-quoted work: first, that democracy and freedom differ from each other, second, that democracy and freedom preclude each other. At a first glance, these ideas may seem strange. Actually, it is not only vulgar Marxists who identify these two concepts, but so does the everyday conception of democracy as well. A thorough study of the topic, however, proves that this procedure is incorrect.

2.4.1. The Difference between Democracy and Freedom

Democracy and freedom are not identical because they are social categories of different order.

Democracy is a political category denoting a form of state, a form of government, a way of exercising power.

And what is freedom? Basically, *freedom has two meanings*: on the one hand, it means a *specifically human dimension*, on the other hand, it is the *totality of the democratic rights of freedom*. Consequently, freedom may have two different relations to democracy. The relation of democracy to total freedom differs from its relation to political freedom. However, in whatever sense we are examining freedom, it cannot be identified with democracy. They differ as regards both their form and their content.

As regards freedom as a specifically human dimension, Marx and Engels wrote as follows in their work *The German Ideology*: "Up to now freedom has been defined by philosophers in two ways; on the one hand, as power, as domination over the circumstances and conditions in which an individual lives—by all materialists; on the other hand, as self-deter-

¹⁰⁹ V. I. Lenin: *Marxism on the State*. p. 25.

¹¹⁰ V. I. Lenin: *Marxism on the State*. p. 26.

mination, riddance of the real world, as merely imaginary freedom of the spirit—this definition was given by all idealists. . . .”¹¹¹ Similarly to the materialist ideas, Marxism interprets freedom as a *positive state*, as the *actual* power of people under *real* conditions. The following thesis exactly expresses this: “Freedom therefore consists in the control over ourselves and over external nature, a control founded on knowledge of natural necessity; it is therefore necessarily a product of historical development.”¹¹²

That is, freedom is control over nature, control over society and control over ourselves. These three aspects of freedom cannot be realized at once, at the same time.

The realization of freedom is a historical process in a double sense.

First, the basic conditions for ensuring control over nature are the increase and development of the forces of production, the increase of their effectiveness and the recognition of the long-range effects of human activity on nature and on society. These conditions can be created by humanity only gradually, in the course of long historical development. Through them, humanity can make nature serve its objectives and can increasingly get control over nature. However, this is only a possibility which cannot be realized until the means are possessed by the exploiting classes and are subordinated to their objectives. The possibility of controlling nature, based on the recognition and correct application of the laws of nature, can be basically realized through the abolition of the capitalist system and the construction of socialist social relations, while it can be completely realized only by way of social freedom created in the course of the construction of communism.

Secondly, it is a fundamental condition of social freedom to be realized in communism that the abundance of goods be created as well as such a wealth of society exist which makes it possible to assert the communist principle “everybody works according to his ability, and everybody shares in the goods produced according to his needs”. That is, control over nature must precede control over society. However, a highly developed economy is not the only precondition of ensuring social freedom; the other one is the communist, revolutionary transformation of society.

¹¹¹ K. Marx and F. Engels: *Collected Works*. Vol. 5. Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1976, p. 301.

¹¹² F. Engels: *Anti-Dühring. Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science*. Moscow, 1975, p. 137.

This means the following: the abolition of every class and social difference and of the inherited division of labour; the annihilation of the institutions of the old exploiting system; later, the withering away of the socialist state, the disappearance of obsolete ideas, the development of people's completely new, communist consciousness, feelings and morals—that is, it means a *total* transformation covering *every* dimension of human existence. Of course, this situation can also be achieved only gradually, in the course of a long development period. One or two of these conditions, e.g. communist consciousness or morals, may and indeed do appear in a germ or even more developed form already under the antagonistic social relations. Their full evolvment on a mass scale, however, is only made possible under socialist circumstances. That is why Marxism emphasizes that socialism is a transition from the realm of necessity to the realm of freedom.

Control over nature and social freedom are preconditions for control over ourselves becoming general, that is, for the realization of individual freedom, for the self-realization of individuals as social personalities. Since, however, this demands the versatile, conscious and active efforts of the individuals, it will be characteristic of everyone only in the course of a gradual process. The evolvment of individual freedom, its becoming a universal phenomenon does not only mean the accomplishment of the various aspects of freedom, but it also indicates that the formation of such a society has come to an end in which—to quote the Communist Manifesto—“the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all.”¹¹³

By this we have reached the second aspect of the historical character of freedom. When people have realized their control over nature, over society and themselves, that is, when they have achieved the realm of freedom, this qualitative change will not mean the end of further development. Bourgeois philosophers of history accuse the Marxist-Leninist ideas about the attainability of freedom (and the ways in which it can be attained) of representing some eschatology, some secularized salvation, which repeats the mistake in Hegel's philosophy, i.e., that he put an end at a given point to an endless development. However, Marxism has always made it clear that by attaining the realm of freedom it is only the preliminary history of mankind that has come to its end, and it is precisely this point where its *real history* begins. It is precisely here that the

¹¹³ K. Marx and F. Engels: *Collected Works*. Vol. 6. p. 506.

truly versatile, restriction-free human development starts, which will lead to the manifold evolvment and activization of each individual's every kind of ability; and this is the important motive force of true historical development. That is why Lenin wrote that "... it is important to realise how infinitely mendacious is the ordinary bourgeois conception of socialism as something lifeless, rigid, fixed once and for all, whereas in reality only socialism will be the beginning of a rapid, genuine, truly mass forward movement, embracing first the *majority* and then the whole of the population, in all spheres of public and private life".¹¹⁴

Freedom is the most inner quality of the human being—it is itself the true human existence. That is why Marx said that "The mortal danger for every being lies in losing itself. Hence lack of freedom is the real mortal danger for mankind".¹¹⁵

Freedom is a manifold totality, the unity of various aspects, each of which is an essential expression of our being human. In 1842, in an article analysing the debates on the freedom of the press, the then revolutionary democrat Marx wrote as follows: "Freedom of trade, freedom of property, of conscience, of the press, of the courts, are all *species* of one and the same genus, *freedom without any specific name*."¹¹⁶

From among these different "species" of freedom, none of them may be privileged according Marx. As he wrote, "... it is quite incorrect to forget the difference because of the unity and to go so far as to make a *particular* species the measure, the standard, the sphere of other species. This is an *intolerance* on the part of one species of freedom, which is only prepared to tolerate the existence of others if they renounce themselves and declare themselves to be its vassals". That is, as it logically follows from Marx's train of thought, political freedom too is not a value in itself, neither is it of the highest value: it is a partial form necessary in a given historical period, of total freedom. As he continues: "Every particular sphere of freedom is the freedom of a particular sphere, just as every particular mode of life is the mode of life of a particular nature. ... As in the universe each planet, while turning on its own axis, moves only around the sun, so in the system of freedom each of its worlds, while turning on its own axis, revolves only around the central sun of freedom."¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 25. p. 472.

¹¹⁵ K. Marx and F. Engels: *Collected Works*. Vol. 1. p. 164.

¹¹⁶ K. Marx and F. Engels: *Collected Works*. Vol. 1. p. 173.

¹¹⁷ K. Marx and F. Engels: *Collected Works*. Vol. 1. pp. 173—174.

It follows from the totality of freedom that its integrity may not be impaired, otherwise freedom cannot become full and vanishes. This is what Marx stated in his already mentioned work: "one form of freedom governs another just as one limb of the body does another. Whenever a particular freedom is put in question, freedom in general is put in question. Whenever one form of freedom is rejected, freedom in general is rejected and henceforth can have only a semblance of existence, since the sphere in which absence of freedom is dominant becomes a matter of pure chance."¹¹⁸

Although Marx, in this work of his, started from the fact that it needs a historical process to attain freedom and so he justifiably treated the 19th century *concrete* measures aimed at promoting bourgeois progress as the *then* valid conditions and elements of promoting the development of freedom and of making it more attainable, his work nevertheless may suggest the semblance as if *these partial freedoms* have always been the invariable conditions and parts of freedom. In some of his later works he actually pointed out the historically limited character of these measures. Nonetheless, what Marx said about freedom as a totality as well as the statements according to which freedom is the 'summary' of partial moments having relative self-motion, without which freedom cannot exist, are still valid theses.

Whether we take the materialist or the idealist conception, *freedom* is a *totality* expressing *general*, comprehensive, *higher-order*, true human existence. *Compared to this*, democracy as a political category is always a narrower and more limited factor. To characterize the difference between them, Marx writes that it is of such a dimension "... as *man* is more infinite than the *citizen*, and *human life* more infinite than *political life*".¹¹⁹

Democracy is not only a *partial possibility* of human life but also a *formal* one which can be realized only to a certain extent. Freedom, however, is the *actual and full realization* of *real human* existence. As Marx expressed it: "... freedom includes not only *what* my life is, but equally *how* I live, not only that I do what is free, but also that I do it freely."¹²⁰

Neither is the term 'freedom' identical with that of 'democracy' even if we use it in a narrower sense, meaning simply political freedom.

¹¹⁸ K. Marx and F. Engels: *Collected Works*. Vol. 1. pp. 180—181.

¹¹⁹ K. Marx and F. Engels: *Collected Works*. Vol. 3. p. 205.

¹²⁰ K. Marx and F. Engels: *Collected Works*. Vol. 1. pp. 166—167.

Democracy as a form of the state is essentially a wider category than the human rights of freedom. First, because as a specific form of rule it is *also* realized, in important social issues, in the form of class dictatorship, that is, democracy is in unity with dictatorship. Secondly, because democracy as the state itself, also involves state coercion.

As regards the organizational forms, democracy is a wider category than the human rights of freedom insofar as it does not only consist of them but also of the principles and measures relating to the form of government of the state, its organizational structure, political system, etc.

It follows from all this that democracy does not only mean political rights of freedom but much more than that, e.g. the regularities of those institutions and measures which are necessary for the assertion of rights and which also entail restrictions; that is, democracy is a more comprehensive category than freedom taken in the political sense.

2.4.2. The Contradiction between Democracy and Freedom

Lenin's already quoted thesis clearly emphasizes that democracy precludes freedom, that freedom is in contradiction with democracy.

On what does Lenin base his thesis on the contradiction between democracy and freedom?

First on the fact that democracy can never ensure *complete* freedom—either we take it in the narrower or the wider sense. Namely, democracy is the consequence and expression of such conditions under which it is impossible to ensure complete freedom for everyone. And *partial* freedoms are *not identical* with restriction-free freedom in general, without any attribute, with freedom in the true sense of the word, meaning complete freedom. *In this sense*, democracy is definitely the opposite of freedom, i. e. of complete freedom.

Secondly, if we examine the relationship between democracy and freedom as the specific dimensions of human existence, it will turn out that there is a sharp contradiction between them. This contradiction has been revealed primarily by Marx and Engels in their studies on political emancipation.

In his work *On the Jewish Question*, Marx criticized Bruno Bauer's ideas about the emancipation of the Jews. As a summary he stated that, on the one hand, Bauer demanded the Jews to renounce Judaism, and at all people to renounce religion, in order that they be emancipated as

citizens. On the other hand, insofar as religion ceases to be a political issue for the state, religion will cease to exist in general—as Bauer says. Marx characterized this way of posing the question as a one-sided approach. He stated: “It was by no means sufficient to investigate who is to emancipate? Who is to be emancipated? Criticism had to investigate a third point. It had to inquire: *What kind of emancipation* is in question? What conditions follow from the very nature of the emancipation that is demanded? Only the criticism of *political emancipation* itself would have been the conclusive criticism of the Jewish question and its real merging in the ‘*general question of the time*’.”¹²¹

That is why Marx started out from the evaluation of political emancipation, i.e. of the possibilities of attaining the democratic human rights of freedom. In the context of the concrete situation, the earlier thesis—given as a programme—of surpassing the political sphere assumes a definite and clear form. Namely, Marx states that “... the attitude of the state ... to the religion is after all only the attitude to religion of the *men* who compose the state. It follows from this that man frees himself through *the medium of the state*, that he frees himself *politically* from a limitation when, in contradiction with himself, he raises himself above this limitation in an *abstract, limited* and partial way. It follows further that, by freeing himself *politically*, man frees himself in a *roundabout* way, through an *intermediary*, although an *essential intermediary*.”¹²² That is, political emancipation is a roundabout, partial, limited and abstract emancipation, in the course of which man frees himself only partially, but nonetheless, this is the necessary road leading to human freedom.

Marx points out—and this idea was very significant before the bourgeois revolution—that “Political emancipation is, of course, a big step forward. True, it is not the final form of human emancipation in general, but it is the final form of human emancipation within the hitherto existing world order.”¹²³ That is, Marx acknowledged that the achievements of the bourgeois revolution, viz. political emancipation including political and legal equality, democratic government, meant a big step forward; and, we may say, their consistent realization indicates the farthest frontier as far as bourgeois society can get.

¹²¹ K. Marx and F. Engels: *Collected Works*. Vol. 3. p. 149.

¹²² K. Marx and F. Engels: *Collected Works*. Vol. 3. p. 152.

¹²³ K. Marx and F. Engels: *Collected Works*. Vol. 3. p. 155.

Political emancipation, i.e. political—legal equality attainable by way of democracy, leads on the one hand to man's liberation in the legal, political sense, while on the other hand it results in the fact that the exploiting conditions remain unchanged, as political emancipation does not affect them. That is, "The state abolishes, in its own way, distinctions of *birth, social rank, education, occupation*, when it declares that birth, social rank, education, occupation, are *non-political* distinctions, when it proclaims, without regard to these distinctions, that every member of the nation is an *equal* participant in national sovereignty, when it treats all elements of the real life of the nation from the standpoint of the state. Nevertheless, the state allows private property, education, occupation, to *act in their way*, i.e., as private property, education, occupation, and to exert the influence of their *special* nature. Far from abolishing these *real* distinctions, the state only exists on presupposition of their existence; it feels itself to be a *political state* and asserts its *universality* only in opposition to these elements of its being."¹²⁴

What influence do the specific forms of factual social inequalities exert on man? He disintegrates, on the one hand, into a citizen who is *formally* equal with the other men, who is a communal being, who is asked as a communal being to take part in social affairs, and on the other hand, into a member of society who is forced by social conditions to be egoistic and lonely, who opposes every objective of the community. That is, political emancipation in bourgeois society leads to the separation of the citizen and the bourgeois. As Marx formulated it: "Where the political state has attained its true development, man—not only in thought, in consciousness, but in *reality, in life*—leads a twofold life, a heavenly and an earthly life: life in the *political community*, in which he considers himself a *communal being*, and life in *civil society*, in which he acts as a *private individual*, regards other men as a means, degrades himself into a means, and becomes the plaything of alien powers. . . . In his *most immediate* reality, in civil society, man is a secular being. Here, where he regards himself as a real individual, and is so regarded by others, he is a *fictitious* phenomenon. In the state, on the other hand, where man is regarded as a species-being, he is the imaginary member of an illusory sovereignty, is deprived of his real individual life and endowed with an unreal universality."¹²⁵ Continuing this train of thought, Marx also

¹²⁴ K. Marx and F. Engels: *Collected Works*. Vol. 3. p. 153.

¹²⁵ K. Marx and F. Engels: *Collected Works*. Vol. 3. p. 154.

states that "The difference between the religious man and the citizen is the difference between the merchant and the citizen, between the day-labourer and the citizen, between the landowner and the citizen, between the *living individual* and the *citizen*. The contradiction in which the religious man finds himself with the political man is the same contradiction in which the bourgeois finds himself with the *citoyen*, and the member of civil society with his *political lion's skin*."¹²⁶

Consequently, under bourgeois social conditions, the state becomes the manifestation of society's disintegration into political conditions and affairs, on the one hand and into other life-processes of society, on the other. Furthermore, under these conditions, this disintegration also manifests itself in the life of the society's members, namely, in the contradiction between the *illusory* communal being and the *real* social being. As a result, although political emancipation abolishes the state's role in sanctifying religion and thus it makes religion a private affair, by this, however, it does not terminate mystic belief, a basic characteristic of religion, since it is just the conditions of this society that create the secular basis of this belief. "The members of the political state are religious owing to the dualism between individual life and species-life, between the life of civil society and political life", writes Marx. "They are religious because men treat the political life of the state, an area beyond their real individuality, as if it were their true life. They are religious insofar as religion here is the spirit of civil society, expressing the separation and remoteness of man from man."¹²⁷

In bourgeois societies, under bourgeois democratic conditions, man—with his egocentrism—is considered to be sovereign, to be a supreme being; or, to quote Marx's formulation, "... man in his uncivilized, unsocial form, man in his fortuitous existence, man just as he is, man as he has been corrupted by the whole organization of our society, who has lost himself, been alienated, and handed over to the rule on inhuman conditions and elements—in short, man who is not yet a real species-being".¹²⁸

How can we explain that such conditions develop in bourgeois society? As Marx emphasizes it, the reason for this is that only political emancipation has been realized. This revolution was a political one

¹²⁶ K. Marx and F. Engels: *Collected Works*. Vol. 3. p. 154.

¹²⁷ K. Marx and F. Engels: *Collected Works*. Vol. 3. p. 159.

¹²⁸ K. Marx and F. Engels: *Collected Works*. Vol. 3. p. 159.

which realized the free movement of the egoistic man, but it did not revolutionize the whole of society. That is, bourgeois revolution, which has accomplished only political emancipation, has freed only the "unrestrained movement of the spiritual and material elements" of bourgeois society. This idea is not only expressed in *On the Jewish Question* but also in Marx's and Engels's common work *The Holy Family*: "The modern 'public system', the developed modern state, is not based, as *Criticism* thinks, on a society of privileges, but on a society in which *privileges have been abolished and dissolved*, on developed *civil society* in which the vital elements which were still politically bound under the privileged system have been set free. . . . Free industry and free trade abolish privileged exclusivity and thereby the struggle between the privileged exclusivities. They replace exclusivity with man freed from privilege . . . man no longer bound to other men even by the *semblance* of a common bound. Thus they produce the universal struggle of man against man, individual against individual. In the same way *civil society* as a whole is this war against one another of all individuals, who are no longer isolated from one another by anything but their *individuality*. . . . The contradiction between the *democratic representative state* and *civil society* is the completion of the *classic* contradiction between public *commonweal* and *slavery*. In the modern world each person is *at the same time* a member of slave society and of public commonweal. Precisely the *slavery of civil society* is *in appearance* the greatest *freedom*, because it is in appearance the fully developed *independence* of the individual, who considers as his *own* freedom the uncurbed movement, no longer bound by a common bond or by man, of the estranged elements of his life, such as property, industry, religion, etc., whereas actually this is his fully developed slavery and inhumanity."¹²⁹

Political emancipation has abolished feudal privileges. At the same time, however, it has not abolished the social relations which are the sources of social inequality, which make man to become an egoistic private individual. As a consequence: considering man's objective situation, he cannot be free. Mere political emancipation ensures some *partial* freedom, but at the same time it creates such a situation which *precludes* and *negates complete* freedom. That is why Marx wrote in *The Holy Family* that "... 'free humanity' and the 'recognition' of it are nothing but the recognition of the *egoistic civil individual* and of the

¹²⁹ K. Marx and F. Engels: *Collected Works*. Vol. 4. Moscow, 1975, p. 116.

unrestrained movement of the spiritual and material elements which are the content of his life situation, the content of *present-day* civil life; ... the *rights of man* do not ... free man from religion, but give him *freedom of religion*; ... they do not free him from property, but procure for him *freedom of property*; ... they do not free him from the filth of gain, but rather give him freedom of *gainful occupation*".¹³⁰

Marx added to this evaluation the following statements: "... the *recognition of the rights of man* by the *modern state* has no other meaning than the *recognition of slavery* by the *state of antiquity* had. In other words, just as the ancient state had slavery as its *natural basis*, the *modern state* has as its *natural basis* civil society and the *man* of civil society, i.e., the independent man linked with other men only by the ties of private interest and *unconscious* natural necessity, the *slave* of labour for gain and of his own as well as other men's *selfish* need."¹³¹ ("... by the ties of private interest and unconscious natural necessity..." in the quote clearly means the direct negation of freedom.) Marx then goes on stating that the *factual* slavery of bourgeois society is *seemingly* the greatest *freedom*, as people consider the movement of the estranged and unrestrainedly moving elements of their life (viz. property, industry, etc.) to be their own freedom, albeit this movement means actually—on the contrary—the complete slavery and inhumanity of the individual. Hence, political freedom which has set man free from his earlier feudal bonds and made possible the free movement of the elements of his life contradicts man's complete freedom. Man's complete freedom demands the surpassing of political solutions, that is, it demands real social emancipation.¹³²

¹³⁰ K. Marx and F. Engels: *Collected Works*. Vol. 4. p. 113.

¹³¹ K. Marx and F. Engels: *Collected Works*. Vol. 4. p. 113.

¹³² To what extent can these theses be valid in the course of the construction of socialism? During this period, certain laws expressing the essence of the old society still have an effect, albeit under completely new conditions, while on the other hand, the laws of the new social order also assert themselves already, and these latter ones figure as the main tendency as against the laws stemming from the remnants of the old conditions. As a result of the successful construction of socialism, and the level of planning progressing, the independent movement of instinctive and destructive social powers which may undermine the individual's essential conditions of existence become to a great extent limited. However, these forces do not cease to exist completely and in many respects socialism develops under the force of the "inherited" consequences of former social relations and under such conditions that it has to defend itself against its enemies' steps which mean an external, real danger. Not to speak of the past when

In the course of examining the consequences of political emancipation and democracy, Marx also elucidates the contradiction between democracy and complete freedom from another aspect.

In the process of political emancipation, man disintegrates into (1) the citizen who has equal rights and duties in public affairs, who is considered to be a communal being, and (2) which necessarily follows from capitalist society, into an egoistic private individual, in its extreme case, the bourgeois.

The citizen—who is *partial* being, since his being is restricted to political life only—represents the *total* being merely in one field, i.e. partially, restricted to only one social sphere, and hence, his communal being can be realized in certain respects only. His life conditions as an individual as well as his social circumstances make him oppose his own communal being. First, because they restrict him even in his political functioning; and secondly, because—and this is more important—also people concerned with public affairs must primarily deal with themselves and their family, since public spirit and activity expressed in the political sphere under the given social conditions—just because they are restricted to the political sphere only—can only assert themselves to a small extent and demand some extra activity which is in addition to the everyday affairs. And people do not always have time to deal with politics. Then, if one has to choose between everyday activity of *private* interest and a political act, a *public* action, he will more probably choose the former one, since he cannot live from politics, since on the busy weekdays he must carry out activity through which he can keep himself and his family in an adequate way. Thus, public functions and everyday actions separate, moreover, they even contradict one another several times. Man

the hindering factors asserted themselves more freely, this still restricts the conscious forces of socialism in their decisions in the interest of socialism, that is, it decreases their freedom of activity. This, of course, makes it more difficult for them to realize their aim, to attain communism, the “kingdom of freedom”. Men in socialist societies are no longer the slaves of inhuman conditions, they are not at all the simple functions of their conditions, but they are not yet the free creators of their fates either (and they cannot even become that until the realization of communism).

In the course of socialist transformation, the role of the political factor has changed. As a result of the positive changes in socialism and of the political revolution which leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat, politics does have a progressive role. Consequently, here democracy does not automatically get into opposition with complete freedom, moreover, it becomes a factor that promotes human freedom—unlike in Marx’s thesis which generalizes the conditions in the exploiting societies.

disintegrated into citizen and egoistic private individual cannot be a free man living a harmonious and full life. Consequently, considering the subjective side, i.e. the politically emancipated man, democracy is again the negation of complete freedom.¹³³

Freedom, taken in the general sense, and democracy are not only in contradiction because democracy precludes freedom, but also because freedom, too, precludes democracy, if we consider the matter in a historical perspective. When and to the extent communism, the "kingdom of freedom", is realized and there is no more external danger, nor any other disturbing factor, e.g. the contradictions arising from the disproportionate economic development of the socialist societies, that might threaten the new social order, that is, when people get used to living their public and private life as free, conscious and active individuals and in a human way, then the state will no longer be needed to exist and democracy, its typical form in socialism, will become full and customary, and hence, it will wither away. This perspective is expressed by Lenin in his work *Marxism on the State*, when he writes that "When there is freedom, then there will be no state".¹³⁴

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The third aspect of Lenin's thesis "Democracy precludes freedom" is that democracy is not only partially identical with freedom taken in the political sense but is also in conflict with it.

Marx and Engels dealt with this problem in 1875 when they criticized the draft programme prepared for the Gotha party congress for having made serious concessions of principle to Lassalleanism.

Under Lassallean influence, the leaders of the united party included in the draft the thesis on free people's state. In his first counter-argument Marx emphasized that the workers could not at all aim at making the state free, freedom just demanded the restriction of the state (and let us add, also the democratic state). (That is, freedom is realized versus democracy!) As Marx formulated: "Freedom consists in converting the state from an organ superimposed upon society into one completely subordinate to it, and today, too, the forms of state are more free or less

¹³³ Under socialist conditions—even if not in the extreme form characteristic of the antagonistic societies—man's disintegration into citizen and egoistic private individual still asserts itself; this is partly due to the limited character of democracy, of political emancipation. This problem as well as its consequences will be dealt with in detail in the subsequent chapters.

¹³⁴ V. I. Lenin: *Marxism on the State*. p. 25.

free to the extent that they restrict the 'freedom of the state'."¹³⁵ His other counter-argument ran like this: in the course of the coming socialist transformation, the state will still be needed partly for the effective handling of public affairs and partly for suppressing the enemies of socialism, that is, it will be the state of the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat. "Between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. Corresponding to this is also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but *the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat*", Marx stated in his often quoted, well-known thesis.¹³⁶

Engels's opinion is very similar to this: "Taken in its grammatical sense, a free state is one where the state is free in relation to its citizens, hence a state with a despotic government. . . . As therefore, the state is only a transitional institution which is used in the struggle, in the revolution, to hold down one's adversaries by force, it is pure nonsense to talk of a free people's state: so long as the proletariat still *uses* the state, it does not use it in the interests of freedom but in order to hold down its adversaries, and as soon as it becomes possible to speak of freedom the state as such ceases to exist."¹³⁷

Hence, democracy as a form of the state can by no means be identified with freedom. For some, primarily for the members of the ruling class, it means freedom, for others, for the classes that are suppressed and excluded from the power, it means the lack of freedom, because, as Lenin wrote it, ". . . there is no freedom and no democracy where there is suppression and where there is violence."¹³⁸ Democracy as a form of state, using state coercion, inhibits certain social groups—e.g. those deprived of their political rights, or subverters, trouble-makers, criminals—from acting 'freely'. In other words, it restricts or simply prohibits certain actions, e.g. those rejected by public opinion.

Consequently, democracy is a form of rule which acts contrary to the full evolvement of political freedom.¹³⁹

¹³⁵ K. Marx and F. Engels: *Selected Works in Three Volumes*. Vol. 3. Moscow, 1970, p. 25.

¹³⁶ K. Marx and F. Engels: *Selected Works in Three Volumes*. Vol. 3. p. 26.

¹³⁷ K. Marx and F. Engels: *Selected Works in Three Volumes*. Vol. 3. pp. 34—35.

¹³⁸ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 25. p. 462.

¹³⁹ Under socialist conditions, the relationship between democracy and the political rights of freedom becomes modified in many respects. This problem belongs to the topic of the following chapters where it will be dealt with in detail.

Of course, the question is *not that democracy precludes every kind of freedom* and thus the question whether there is democracy or not might become immaterial. Moreover, it cannot be disputed that as regards really attainable freedom, the existence of democracy is a more positive state than a non-democratic system. *Democracy may be one of the roads and means to complete freedom.* Considering the political sphere, democracy must by any means involve at least certain minimum of political rights of freedom. Hence, the relationship between democracy and freedom is not only negative, i.e., they do not only represent opposition but a kind of unity as well. Consequently, despotism, tyranny and democracy are not of the same value and their relation to freedom is of course different.

As we have mentioned it, *there may be, naturally, also a positive relationship* between the struggle for extending the political rights of freedom and the attainment of complete human freedom. This struggle, if it aims at extending political freedom in the interest of the working class, of the workers, *may promote the general liberation of these people.* It was in this sense that Lenin wrote that "To develop democracy *to the utmost*, to find the *forms* for this development, to test them *by practice*, and so forth—all this is one of the component tasks of the struggle for the social revolution".¹⁴⁰ For example, struggle for such an objective that "...all officials should be responsible for all their official acts to every citizen before the ordinary courts and according to common law..."¹⁴¹—which Engels called "The first condition of all freedom" in his letter of March 18—28, 1875 written to Bebel—not only means the extension of the rights of freedom but also a step forward towards the era in which the people will exercise self-government.

In itself, however, the extension of political freedom is in no direct relation to the attainment of complete freedom. As Lenin said, bourgeois democracy does not develop further in a simple and direct way, smoothly, towards greater and greater democracy. The dictatorship of the proletariat is needed so that the extension of democracy bring nearer universal human freedom.

But this involves the limitation of certain classes' (political) freedom, sometimes only *de jure* but mostly *de facto*, especially in the transitional

¹⁴⁰ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 25. p. 452.

¹⁴¹ K. Marx and F. Engels: *Selected Works in Three Volumes*. Vol. 3. p. 34.

period, i.e., until the social structure characteristic of socialism has been realized, and the foundations of socialism laid.

And Lenin also said that perfectly realized democracy would change from bourgeois democracy into proletarian democracy. For this, however, "only" the smashing of the old state and the creation of a new type of state is needed. So, Lenin was justified to state: "But as a matter of fact this 'only' signifies a gigantic replacement of certain institutions by other institutions of a fundamentally different type."¹⁴²

The extension of the rights of freedom of democracy can mean progress towards total freedom only through such mediations.

The extension of the rights of freedom of democracy does not in itself mean the growth of the elements of complete freedom. In the course of history, it has always been the case in democracies that some social classes have been free, while others' rights have been restricted. As Marx wrote it: "No man combats freedom; at most he combats the freedom of others. Hence every kind of freedom has always existed, only at one time as a special privilege, at another as a universal right."¹⁴³ This same idea is treated by Lenin in greater detail in a later period: "... even in the freest and most democratic bourgeois republic, 'freedom' and 'equality' never were, and never could be, anything but an expression of the equality and freedom of the commodity owners, the equality and freedom of capital. Marx, in all of his writings ... made this clear thousands of times; he ridiculed the abstract conception of 'freedom and equality'...."¹⁴⁴

It follows from this that the extension of the political rights of freedom in itself does not mean progress towards complete freedom. This is a contradictory process in class societies. If in a society there are antagonistic classes, the programme of extending freedom will necessarily increase the sphere of activity of one class and the restriction of freedom of the other. For instance, if in capitalism, democracy increases as a result of workers' struggle, this is a step forward towards the "kingdom of freedom". If, however, in socialism, 'freedom is extended' without any differentiation, this will unavoidably lead to the strengthening of the anti-socialist forces and thus the realization of complete freedom will be delayed. That is why the demagogue slogan—proclaimed both during

¹⁴² V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 25. p. 419.

¹⁴³ K. Marx and F. Engels: *Collected Works*. Vol. 1. p. 155.

¹⁴⁴ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 29. pp. 379–380.

the Soviet Russian civil war and before and during the Hungarian counterrevolution—was mistaken, which demanded full democracy and complete freedom, *instead of* the power of the working class, which was in danger. Our party and state start out from this recognition when they oppose every effort at interpreting the measures aimed at extending socialist democracy as a 'liberalization', i.e. as making possible the activity of the enemy forces of the socialist system.

Political freedom is a means. Marxism always evaluates this freedom from the aspect of the extent to which it is a means of struggle of the working class, of the working people. As Lenin wrote it: "... for every revolution, socialist or democratic, freedom is a very, very important slogan. But our programme says that if freedom runs counter to the emancipation of labour from the yoke of the capital, it is a deception. . . . At the present time, when things have reached the stage of overthrowing the rule of capital all over the world, or at all events in one country, . . . all those who in such a political situation talk about 'freedom in general', who in the name of this freedom oppose the dictatorship of the proletariat are doing nothing more or less than aiding and abetting the exploiters, for unless freedom promotes the emancipation of labour from the yoke of capital, it is a deception."¹⁴⁵

Consequently, political freedom is not an end in itself, but a means in the hands of certain given classes. It cannot fulfil its progressive or reactionary role in society alone, only together with other phenomena, depending on and subordinated to them. Only if the "class content" of freedom and its effect on other classes are assessed and the conditions of its realization are examined, can we decide the relationship of political freedom to the realization of complete freedom.

¹⁴⁵ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 29. pp. 351—352. — It was from the Marxist Leninist conception, according to which freedom is the means of liberating the working class and this means must always be subordinated to the interests of the general struggle of the working class for the "kingdom of freedom", that Lenin's below-quoted standpoint followed, which he repeatedly asserted during the First World War, namely: "The several demands of democracy, including self-determination, are not an absolute but only a *small part* of the general-democratic (now general-socialist) *world* movement. . . . It is possible that the republican movement in one country may be merely an instrument of the clerical or financial monarchist intrigues of other countries; if so, we must *not* support this particular, concrete movement." (V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 22. p. 341.)

The Marxist-Leninist distinction between the categories and problems of democracy and freedom is very important. It expresses that Marxism does not confuse the part with the whole; namely, *political* emancipation with *complete* human freedom, or, taking another dimension, a *part* or *manifestation of the form of rule* with form of rule itself. This distinction represents the firm and consistent proletarian—revolutionary standpoint which is not satisfied with *partial liberation*, with political emancipation, and which holds *that true, complete human freedom cannot be exchanged for political freedom. Making use of democracy, accomplishing it and at the same time also surpassing it, the "kingdom of freedom" must be realized.*

2.5. Democracy as a Historical Category

Democracy as a political category, as a form of the state, is a *historical category*; that is, it came into being after the state had come into existence and it will wither away together with the state. This idea has always been stressed by the classics of Marxism. "Democracy, of course," writes Lenin, "is also a form of state which must disappear when the state disappears, but that will only take place in the transition from conclusively victorious and consolidated socialism to full communism."¹⁴⁶ Then, in his work *The State and Revolution*, where he was arguing with the opportunists, Lenin again dealt with problem: "... democracy *also* being a state and, consequently, [it is] also disappearing when the state disappears. Revolution alone can 'abolish' the bourgeois state. The state in general, i.e., the most complete democracy, can only 'wither away'."¹⁴⁷ Otherwise, in this work, Lenin deals with this problem in several chapters.

In the course of examining the withering away of democracy, it is very important to consider Lenin's statements which approach from another side, from that of historical development, the difference between democracy as state, as a form of rule and everyday democracy which is a specific expression of the former. While *democracy as a form of state* will definitely disappear in a given development phase of history, *democratism*, a form of it, which assumed some state character at a certain development phase, will survive—but free from the formerly mentioned

¹⁴⁶ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 22. p. 144.

¹⁴⁷ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 25. p. 397.

state character. About the withering away of democracy, Lenin wrote as follows: "At first sight this assertion seems exceedingly strange and incomprehensible; indeed, someone may even suspect us of expecting the advent of a system of society in which the principle of subordination of the minority to the majority will not be observed—for democracy means the recognition of this very principle. No. Democracy is *not* identical with the subordination of the minority to the majority. Democracy is a *state*."¹⁴⁸

Later on he again reverts to this problem: "We do not expect the advent of a system of society in which the principle of subordination of the minority to the majority will not be observed," but in communism, at the realization of which we make our efforts, people will definitely observe this principle, as they "...will *become accustomed* to observing the elementary conditions of social life *without violence* and *without subordination*."¹⁴⁹

When disputing the thesis of "industrial democracy", Lenin argued in a similar way, although here he emphasized another aspect. "Industry is indispensable. Democracy is a category proper only to the political sphere," he wrote and then he stated as against the believers in "industrial democracy", who said that democracy consisted in the election of politically reliable economic leaders, that their "... reasoning... is obviously artificial and incorrect. For one thing, democracy is more than 'nomination and seconding of candidates, elections, etc.' then, again, not all elections should be held with an eye to political staunchness and business efficiency."¹⁵⁰ What is the essence of these thoughts?

First it means that democracy does not consist in, is not identical with, elections, nominations, etc., and that these are not necessarily categories relating to the state; secondly, that the application of these does not in every case serve the assertion of political objectives.

Lenin's separation of democracy as a form of the exercise of power and democratism as a part thereof is based on historical facts as well as on their generalizations by Marx and Engels. As Engels described in his work *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, in primitive communal systems a kind of "primitive democracy" was predominant. Let us quote Engels himself: "Everything runs smoothly without soldiers,

¹⁴⁸ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 25. p. 456.

¹⁴⁹ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 25. p. 456.

¹⁵⁰ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 32. pp. 26, 81—82.

gendarmes or police; without nobles, kings, governors, prefects or judges; without prisons; without trials. All quarrels and disputes are settled by the whole body of those concerned Although there are many more affairs in common than at present . . . still, not a bit of our extensive and complicated machinery of administration is required. Those concerned decide There can be no poor and needy All are free and equal—including the women.”¹⁵¹ As it turns out from this quote too, primitive communal society was based on direct democracy (to use a modern term), which is characterized by equality, freedom, election and people’s decision, etc. This “direct democracy”, however, is *not a kind of rule, is not a form of state, as there is no state yet; hence, democracy cannot assume a state character.*

With the advent of the state, of class society, a basic change occurred. Society begins to get atomized, it disintegrates into individuals having private interests, into families, social groups, some of which get sometimes into antagonistic relationship to one another. The state—the official expression for society—becomes (to use Marx’s and Engels’s terminology) an illusory community in the antagonism of these interests. This organization, first in the slave societies, then in the subsequent class societies, ensures the opportunity for the members of the ruling class to exercise power in a democratic way. In the process, *democracy assumes a state character.* Actually, this is expressed in the fact that equality has become *citizens’ equality before the law*, freedom has become *political freedom*, and majority decision has become decision by those who possess *political and economic power.*

Besides the state character of democracy, in certain spheres of society’s life or in certain affairs of its classes, *the non-state character of democracy also exists.* For example, the followings are also practised under capitalist conditions: election, nomination, voting; the principle of majority decision in bourgeois parties, associations or at the general meeting of joint stock companies, just as in the social organizations of other classes, thus in workers’ associations, trade unions, workers’ parties, etc. This situation is even more characteristic under socialist circumstances where the democratic character of workers’ organizations becomes predominant. However, the *non-state* forms of democracy play in society’s life a role *subordinate* to the state forms—as long as the state exists.

The withering away of democracy and of the state does not mean

¹⁵¹ K. Marx and F. Engels: *Selected Works in Three Volumes*. Vol. 3. p. 266.

that democratism will cease to exist. Its state forms will lose their state-political character and thus they will mean general social equality, valid for every member of the community, they will mean universal—not only political—freedom, and majority decision will really express the actual interests of society—just because the classes will disappear. Governing and control over people will be replaced by self-government based on the social activity of every member of the community.

Under communism, people will be free to develop their abilities and to assert their positive actions. As a consequence, social activity will increase, its forms of expression grow and its sphere broaden. The earlier forms of democratism of a non-state character will become much more significant under these circumstances.

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We think that the essence of the Marxist interpretation of democracy has become clear from this sketchy review of the statements on democracy of the classics of Marxism-Leninism.

First, the classics of Marxism-Leninism treated *democracy as a form of state*, that is, its evolution, its fate is closely related to that of the state, or in other words, its historical changes depend on those of the state.

Secondly, *democracy* is itself the state, that is, it is a power organ, it is *the organ of the ruling class*, it depends on society, on the social conditions and primarily on the will of the ruling class.

Thirdly, *democracy as a form of state may express either the rule of the exploiting classes* (all the exploiting societies) *or the rule of the people* (e.g. socialist democracy).

When democracy expresses the rule of the exploiting classes under bourgeois social conditions, this means an advantageous situation for the struggle of the working class, which the workers must make use of in the interest of furthering their struggles, and in which they must make every effort to extend democracy in a way that the resulting situation may become an advantageous starting point for socialist revolution.

Democracy as a form of state denotes the rule of the people. Until it is realized it figures as a programme of struggle for socialist revolution. *After socialist revolution has achieved victory it becomes a means in the hands of the people, of the workers, to be used in the interest of their social liberation.* It becomes democracy for the people and dictatorship for the former exploiting classes, and it means continual interference, through

state means too, in the social relations in the interest of attaining socialism and then communism.

Fourthly, *democracy is a political category*. As such, it always expresses the contradiction between the social being and the private being, it always expresses the immaturity of social conditions, as a result of which equality can be realized only partially, only politically and legally. *That is why democracy cannot be the final objective of the struggle of the working class. Democracy must be used as a means for surpassing politics, for surpassing everything related to the state, that is, for realizing true social emancipation.*

Part Two

The Criteria of Democracy

Chapter 3

On the Conditions and Characteristic Features of Democracy

3.1. On the Conditions of Democracy

The appearance of every democratic mode of rule depends on *certain conditions*.

The first fundamental condition is the ultimate victory of the victorious class in the revolution over the overthrown ruling class and the consolidation of its power.

The ultimate victory of a system, however, entails more than the mere consolidation of the new power. It entails the total eradication of the influence of the old ruling classes, the immutability of the new order, viz., the irreversibility of the development of affairs.

Thus, after the consolidation of the capitalist system, when the landowners deemed it more and more hopeless to restore the old order and, therefore, they started to adapt themselves to the circumstances of the new society, the condition of the evolution of bourgeois democracy was the struggle against such attempts of the former ruling class at retaining their old governmental positions or at penetrating the new system, that could deform the capitalist character of the new system, and that could restrict the scope of authority of the victorious class. The persistence of that danger is characterized, e.g. by the fact that in England J. S. Mill was fully convinced still in 1840 (i.e. 200 years after the English revolution) that "the middle class (i.e. the bourgeoisie—A. K.) was as little in danger of being outstripped by the democracy below, as being kept down by the aristocracy above".¹ The history of France between 1789 and the consolidation of the third republic (in the period 1880—1890) is the scene of the struggle between the bourgeoisie and the aristocracy. It took the bourgeoisie approximately a century to consolidate its system. In Germany, following the 1848 revolution, the democratic forces were struggling for 50 years with the Junkers, the feudal-capitalistic bureaucracy and the caste of military officers to achieve some democracy.

The above-mentioned fundamental condition of the evolution and

¹ J. A. Christophersen: Op. cit. p. 160.

existence of democracy, viz. the *ultimate* victory of the ruling class over the old order, applies first and foremost to the democracies of the exploiting classes, especially bourgeois democracy. In the period of the consolidation of its power, the new exploiting class in power—owing to the fact that power is wielded by a minority of the population—cannot undertake to struggle in a democratic way in “two fronts”: on the one hand, against the attempts of the former exploiting class at restoration and, on the other hand, against the majority of the population—the working people, oppressed and exploited by the new ruling class itself. It cannot undertake that, since historical examples (among others, Vendée in an extreme form or, in a more peaceful form, the beginnings of the Christian socialist movement or, citing the history British factory acts, the first reduction of the working hours by the Tories) have proved that, to realize their aspirations for power, the overthrown ruling class or other conservative forces would sometimes join forces even with sections of the masses under the oppression of the new class in power, and thus may pose a real danger to the new order. Thence it follows that a new exploiting class, e.g. the bourgeoisie, does not govern in a democratic way, while the system of safeguards guaranteeing its rule does not evolve. That is why bourgeois rule was undemocratic until the ultimate consolidation of its revolution.

Socialist power is the first where the evolution and functioning of the *democratic exercise of power* do not depend on the ultimate consolidation and victory of this power, but it *prevails from the first days of the new system*. The explanation of that is that socialist power is a rule of the majority which—if we examine only the internal conditions, the relation of class forces—can break down the resistance of the exploiting minority, can oppress it even if the old ruling class (and there have been precedents of that) can win the support of sections of the working masses in the power struggle. Therefore, there is no foundation for the working class to justify the postponement of democratic government before the predominant majority supporting it with the excuse that the secure existence of the system is not yet definitely ensured. On the contrary, it is the realization and furtherance of socialist democracy which makes it possible that, educated by their own experiences, the working masses can espouse even stronger the cause of socialism, and that their consciousness and activity can unfold, as well as their liberated popular strength can turn socialist power invincible.

The *second fundamental condition* of democracy in general and bour-

geois democracy in particular is an *advancement of the economy and—a concomitant—improvement in the cultural and social conditions of the preponderant majority of the population to such an extent that, as a consequence, the social tensions subside considerably* which, in turn *reduces the sharpness of the antagonistic social contradictions* (which are necessarily present in a capitalist society) as well as the number of social conflicts. That is to say, the system must be free of those real conflicts—first of all, those of an economic origin—which could bring the power of the ruling class into crisis or even destruction.

Bourgeois theorists have extensively dealt with this complex condition of the democratic exercise of power. For instance, in the last century, J. S. Mill opined that: “The triumph of democracy . . . does not depend upon any individual or set of individuals that it ought to triumph, but upon the natural laws of the progress of wealth, upon the diffusion of reading, and increase of the facilities of human intercourse.”²

Contemporary authors represent a similar approach to these conditions of democracy. J. and M. Biesanz write that “democracy is most likely to flourish in countries with high levels of wealth, education, urbanization and industrialization.”³ In their monography Carr, Bernstein and Murphy opine that the indispensable conditions of democracy are (1) that the people have to be educated (2) they must have the freedom to travel and exchange views (3) they have to enjoy security economically (4) they should be free of a marked dissention.⁴

For E. Barker the first condition of a democratic order and community is national homogeneity. “There must be some accepted language of intercourse, and some common stock of historical tradition, before there can be any discussion which is conducted in common terms.” The second condition is social homogeneity, by which he means the absence of class consciousness, the elimination of extremes in the economic conditions and of the hostility between town and country. He argues: “If a country made up of different nationalities has not common medium of discussion, the same is true of a country made up of two different nations of rich and poor . . . The ideal discussion is that between equals.”

² Ibid. p. 159.

³ J. Biesanz—M. Biesanz: Op. cit. p. 479.

⁴ R. K. Carr—M. H. Bernstein—W. F. Murphy: Op. cit. p. 402.

The required measure of this equality should be discussed separately, the author holds.⁵

This set of conditions could evolve in the several advanced capitalist countries only by the last third of the 19th century. Viewed in this light, it is more understandable why the bourgeois democratic exercise of power evolved only as late as that.

Bourgeois theorists, too, hold the view that it is difficult if not impossible to introduce democracy in the absence of these conditions, and that the disappearance of any of them poses danger to the existence of an already functioning democracy. In A. D. Lindsay's view, "if the economic, race or other cleavages are too strong, if there are permanent social minorities without the hope of turning itself into a majority, a healthy democracy is so far impossible."⁶ That is fully understandable: in the absence of these conditions, the opponents of the ruling class may take advantage of the social extremes and the resultant tensions, they may incite the malcontent masses to rebel against the democratic exercise of power or, what is more, against the whole existing system. This conclusion is eloquently illustrated by the fascist take-over in Italy in 1922, then in Germany in 1933.

The interrelation of the social tensions and the sharpness of the class struggle on the one hand, and the fate, metamorphoses, and the narrower or broader character of bourgeois democracy on the other, was revealed for the first time by Marxism-Leninism.⁷ Bourgeois theorists realized it much later, as convinced by historical facts and, on occasions by Marxism itself. Today it enjoys wide currency also among them.

Thus, in his treatise on political radicalism, S. M. Lipset holds that in countries with a lower per capita national income, the radical movements are stronger. He sums up the interconnection between the social conditions and action against the capitalist system as a whole in what he describes as a quasi-law of politics: "The inverse relationship between national economic development as reflected by per capita income and the strength of Communists and other extremist groups among Western

⁵ E. Barker: *Reflections on Government*. Oxford University Press, London—Oxford—New York, 1967, p. 62.

⁶ A. D. Lindsay: *The Essentials of Democracy*. Oxford University Press, London, 1935, p. 49.

⁷ Cf. the works by K. Marx and F. Engels written during and about the revolutions of 1848. V. I. Lenin: *The State and Revolution, On the State, Left-wing Communism—an Infantile Disorder, Theses on Bourgeois Democracy*, and other works.

nations is seemingly stronger than the correlations between other national variables like ethnic or religious factors.”⁸

What has been said about this set of conditions elucidates why is it so difficult to establish the bourgeois democratic system in the developing countries, why are such political régimes so precarious, why can they be overthrown relatively easily by coups d'état of handful groups of military officers or by revolts of other minor reactionary groups, why can they be supplanted relatively easily by various military juntas.

If this set of conditions is essential for the existence of democracy or healthy democracy—as attested by both the facts and the bourgeois ideologists generalizing them—it is evident that democracy cannot be called into being at any time, and that it is impossible to “order” its introduction arbitrarily and without taking into consideration the circumstances, first of all, the economic conditions and the social tensions, and that democracy cannot be furthered from subjective desires. In each case the social conditions, a survey, taking the interests of the ruling class as a starting-point, a deliberation of the relevant facts and an assessment—in which the security of those in power is a fundamental criterion—decide: (1) whether to change over to a democratic exercise of power, and if the answer is affirmative, (2) what regulation is needed to ensure the “100 per cent” security of the rule, (3) what will be the democratism of this democracy like and (4) where to draw the “security line”. If this line is transgressed, the ruling class—provided it has the power to do so—restricts democracy or—in the case of the rule of exploiting classes—changes over to undemocratic forms of the exercise of power.

Speaking of this set of conditions, some bourgeois political scientists lay emphasis, first of all, on the economic and cultural conditions of democracy. By mistaking effect for the cause, they describe bourgeois democracy—which came into being as a consequence of the economic consolidation of the capitalist order and of a measure of easing in its social tensions—as the cause of the advanced state of the economy. Employing slogans of bourgeois democracy: “where there is democracy, there is affluence” and “bourgeois democracy is the road to affluence,” they conclude that the advanced capitalist countries’ economy is the example to be followed.

Yet historical facts attest that an advanced state of the economy is

⁸ S. M. Lipset: *Op. cit.* pp. 46 and 45—55.

the necessary condition of democracy only when it is accompanied by other related factors: the given degree in the lessening of the social extremes and of the resultant tensions and contradictions. That degree—which has an influence on the fate of and changing forms of democracy—is determined, first of all and predominantly by the interests of the security of the ruling class. That explains how could democratic government be introduced and maintained not only in the socialist countries, where there is a people's sovereignty, but also in some relatively undeveloped capitalist countries, e.g. India and Chile [under President Salvador Allende—editor's note], and in some developing countries starting a non-capitalist road of development, e.g. Guinea, Tanzania or Burma. For in these countries the national bourgeoisie or the ruling group could rely on the broad masses, consequently, the system has a relative inner stability.

Discussing this fundamental condition of democracy, the politicians of the bourgeoisie write vaguely if at all on its most important condition, the *security of the existing system*. Still it is that factor which determines whether the sum total of the other conditions are favourable for the introduction, maintenance and furtherance of democracy. The historical facts have proved that *the most essential condition of democracy is exactly the security of the ruling class*. The capitalist class has been fully aware of it, and it has acted accordingly in its political practice. Very often, regardless of the fact that a given country is relatively advanced economically, the bourgeoisie responds to each major manifestation of the class struggle by suspending democracy, or with a civil war or its more veiled forms, the pogroms. What is more, the more advanced a capitalist country is—as it can be read in many of Lenin's writings—and the broader is democracy, the more inclined the bourgeoisie is to react to the workers' action it deems to be dangerous, in that manner. The spread of fascism in economically advanced countries, Italy, Germany or Japan, between the two World Wars, or the history of the military juntas also in relatively advanced countries, Argentina or Brazil, after World War II, eloquently prove that the principal condition of democracy is not an advanced state of the country economically and educationally in itself, but the security of the ruling class.

The socialist system is the sovereignty of the people and therefore—as we have already mentioned before—it is a democracy from its beginnings. The measure of its democracy is influenced in part by economic and educational conditions. Thus, e.g. in the individual countries, as long as

there were only slightly more goods available than the bare necessities, as due to the backwardness of the means of production, it was necessary to distribute goods in an administrative and more or less egalitarian way to meet the most basic needs of each and all justly. It would have been totally inexpedient, senseless and harmful to allow the individual groups of people to manifest their particular interests in the questions of distribution, and to let them freely fight for their assertion. No doubt, these measures restricted democratism and self-expression, but they were necessitated by economic backwardness.⁹ Obviously, illiteracy, cultural backwardness and the absence of political culture also hinder the functioning of democracy.

But—like in every other class rule—the factor decisively influencing the democratism of socialist power is the security factor. Socialist democracy must never be a “suicidal democracy”, like the Weimar republic. This form of rule must never be allowed to be strangled with its own democratism. Therefore, *the extent, furtherance and practice of socialist democracy are determined at all times in light of the system's security requirements*. Since this form of state is a form of power exercised by the people, the “security lines” of this democracy are remarkably wide apart. Socialist power excels the democracy of exploiting societies also in that respect. However broad and until now unparalleled is the freedom socialist democracy ensures for the citizens, it is not “limitless democracy”. It cannot be and must not be democracy for any group or attempt endangering the power of the working people.

Bourgeois political scientists in their evaluation of socialist democracy often tend to ignore the above-mentioned second precondition of democratic rule. They confront the already “untroubled” forms of bourgeois democracy with socialist democracy, which—for the time being—has to be vigilant to fight against attempts at intervention, restoration and counter-revolution. In the course of that comparison, they conclude that the former are “more liberal” and “more tolerant” and that they ensure broader human rights than the latter. That is, however, an entirely false and deliberately distorting interpretation.

The political conditions of a given class rule in the making should not be confronted with those of a consolidated and, perhaps, centuries

⁹ True, occasionally the righteous demands were not met either. It must also be admitted that some of the strict regulations tend to outline the circumstances which necessitated them.

old one! Every sensible man will obviously agree that the forms of bourgeois democracy, assumed during the protectorate of the Cromwells or the Jacobinic dictatorship, cannot be considered to be the typical forms of bourgeois rule and that, therefore, they should not be confronted with the political forms of either the consolidated bourgeois rule or of the consolidated socialist system.

The measures and forms of rule dictated by the extraordinary circumstance at the time of the establishment of the rule of a given class must be compared solely with the measures and forms brought by another class under similar circumstances! Applying this principle of examination—which is the only scientific one—we shall find that the consolidation of the bourgeois system entailed greater sacrifices than that of the “Bolshevik”, “communist” system, i.e. proletarian democracy, which is claimed to be “bloody” and “terroristic”.

But the laws of logic cannot be ignored! If the political forms of bourgeois rule in the making are not typical manifestations of this rule and, therefore, they should not be used a model for selecting the differences between bourgeois democracy and socialist democracy, the reverse of it also applies: the forms of the bourgeois democratic exercise of power, gaining wide currency following the consolidation of the capitalist system, do not lend themselves for comparison and consequently, they cannot be confronted as an example and as a superior form of rule with socialist democracy when the latter is unfolding, when it has yet to struggle against the attempts at restoration and when it is functioning under unconsolidated circumstances.

The third fundamental condition of democracy is the demand for and active approach to it. The appearance of democracy is not spontaneous, it cannot be got for nothing. Struggle and sacrifices are necessary to achieve, sustain and further it; active and effective human action have to lend it a genuine content.

Each given form of democracy was achieved at all times in the struggle against the historically obsolete old régime and against those modes of exercising power which had proved to be unmaintainable.

Historical facts have proved that bourgeois democracy, like socialist democracy, gained ground and cost many lives. The antecedents of this form of rule were everywhere the initially covert, but later increasingly overt and widespread ideological and political actions by the bourgeoisie, which the aristocracy strived to mercilessly put down and avenge.

The “midwives” at the birth of bourgeois democracy were the bour-

geois revolutions, which were followed by alternating waves of civil wars—which in turn evolved from the attempts of the overthrown feudal ruling class at restoration: revolutionary and counter-revolutionary terror. The 16th-century war of independence and revolution in the Low Countries, the 17th-century revolution and civil war in England, the American revolution and war of independence, the French revolution and civil war and the foreign intervention in the 18th century, the 19th-century German revolution and the numerous instances of bourgeois transformation in the 20th century all prove that bourgeois democracy came into being and assumed the character we know today in heroic struggles and at the cost of sacrifices.

In a letter to W. S. Smith, Thomas Jefferson wrote in November 1787: "The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants. It is its natural manure."¹⁰ The history of bourgeois democracy corroborates the truth of Jefferson's thesis: the tree of bourgeois freedom was also refreshed with the blood of heroes and martyrs to have it grow big.¹¹

We have had to invoke these historical facts, first of all to make it clear that the evolution of bourgeois democracy was not at all a peaceful process; it was not "the progress of reason," the victorious march of "a form of government worthy of man," but instead, a bloody life-and-death struggle between the obsolete but unyielding old order and the revolutionary forces.

In this respect there is no difference between the emergence of proletarian democracy and that of bourgeois democracy. Socialist democracy has to fight its way toward a genuine people's sovereignty and a system, ensuring freedom and effective rule for the workers, counter to the attempts at restoration of the capitalist forces.

In the exploiting societies, *the furtherance* of democracy is always facilitated by the struggle of the oppressed but resisting classes for the broadening of democracy. No achievement of the democracy of exploiting societies was granted to the oppressed classes by their rulers for

¹⁰ Quoted in: S. K. Padover: Op. cit. p. 99.

¹¹ To illustrate the enormous bloodshed and suffering accompanying the evolution of this form of rule, let us quote the words of A. M. Djeborin. Following the overthrow of Robespierre in the month of Thermidor, "the Thermidoreans, who under Robespierre were against terror, killed all the reputed representatives of the Mountain who had failed to espouse the counter-revolutionary coup d'état. In three days after 9 Thermidor, . . . they murdered 103 of them." A. M. Djeborin: Op. cit. p. 637.

nothing. The masses of people cannot make use of the democratic forms and rights, unless they persistently struggle to put the statutes into practice.

Socialist democracy, too, came into being and has evolved in the struggles against the forces of the old order. But—contrary to the practice of the exploiters—after the establishment of proletarian dictatorship, the working class, which came to power, did not become a hindrance to the evolution of democratic government. On the contrary, it has done its utmost to further socialist democracy. The fact that it does not need to fight against the resistance of any class for the furtherance of socialist democracy does not mean that, in socialism, this form of rule improves and becomes ever more perfect and efficient automatically, and that it finds the optimum forms, institutions and methods to these ends almost instinctively. The conscious socialist forces advocating democracy and the other masses of workers; the whole structure of management “from above” and the millions of working people “from below” have to consider at all times whether the given democratic constitution of things is in harmony with the given situation and its requirements, and whether it ensures for the working people to exercise its power most successfully. In other words, the enlivening and furtherance of democracy are not an automatic process even under socialism. It requires a high-level consciousness of the popular demands and wills and also a creative activity.

3.2. On the “General” Criteria of Democracy

“It has never been easy to say with precision and inclusiveness what democracy is, primarily because one of its salient characteristics is its lack of rigid dogma or structured form,” writes S. K. Padover¹² pointing out the difficulty in finding the criteria by which a political system can be considered democratic.

Due partly to this difficulty, there is no consensus among bourgeois political scientists over the criteria of democracy. In fact, there are conflicting definitions. Joseph Schumpeter for instance has a “single factor”: conception “the democratic method is that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people’s

¹² S. K. Padover: *Op. cit.* p. 9.

vote.”¹³ S. K. Padover employs “multiple factor” characteristics, pointing out five substantial criteria: “(1) equality under the law (2) equality of voting (3) periodic election of representatives (4) legislation by majority rule (5) freedom of political action and policymaking.”¹⁴ Concluding the enumeration of the criteria of democracy, he writes: “the political institutions of democracy call for public participation, uncoerced voting, periodic elections of the most important officers, and regular terms of office fixed by law. It also makes mandatory majority rule and insists that the minority must abide by the decision of that majority, no matter how small or even misguided the latter may be.”¹⁵

Even more criteria of democracy are enumerated by Siegmund Neumann, an internationally-known American expert on political science. His list includes “the leading role of the people,” i.e., people’s sovereignty, which he equals with people’s control; the opportunity to choose between alternatives; the creation and ensurance of a capable leadership; the guaranteed enforcement of laws; concord between the activity of political parties and of the state; pluralism, i.e., the active participation of the members of diverse groups in the life of the community performed through various groups; the safeguarding of security without inhibiting individual initiative and the free sense of responsibility and, finally, the people’s readiness to assume obligations.¹⁶ J. and M. Biesanz speak of the following characteristic norms of democracy: “First, in democracy the welfare of the individual has priority over the interests of the state; government is regarded as serving the people. . . . Second, democratic government is limited in scope; it cannot try to assert total control over persons and institutions. . . . Third, the right to participate in the political process is not denied any person or group on arbitrary of irrelevant grounds. . . . Fourth, citizens are given equal rights under law, and each person’s vote is supposed to count as much as anyone else’s. Fifth, the rights of minorities as well as of individuals are protected. Those who oppose a policy of the incumbent government, as well as those who support it, have free access to the press, can speak

¹³ J. A. Schumpeter: *Op. cit.* p. 269.

¹⁴ S. K. Padover: *Op. cit.* p. 10.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* p. 76.

¹⁶ S. Neumann: “The Democratic Decalogue: Changes in Society,” in: *Democracy in a Changing Society*, ed. H. W. Ehrmann, Praeger Publishers, New York—Washington—London, 1964, pp. 9—21.

and assemble freely, and can advocate alternative policies by non-violent means... Thus every minority has a chance of becoming the majority. These norms are based on four fundamental values: rationality, freedom, equality and individualism. These values are so embedded in the culture of an established democracy that they are taken for granted as the proper criteria for judging means and ends..."¹⁷

Similar views are held by the opportunist and reformist theorists, e.g., K. Kautsky, who writes that parliamentarism, the press and a nationwide system of major party organizations are the criteria... of modern democracy... Democracy implies power vested in the masses of people and the individual emancipated from state power.¹⁸

The English reformist statesman, S. Cripps describes democracy—as we have already mentioned it—as: “a system of government in which every adult citizen is equally free to express his views and desires upon all subjects in whatever way he wishes and to influence the majority of his fellow citizens to decide according to those views and to implement those desires.”¹⁹ The 1962 Manifesto of the Socialist International states that the essential criteria of democracy are the freedom of speech, the freedom of religion, the right of criticism and the right of intercourse with the outside world.²⁰ The Manifesto also declares that freedom and democratic self-government are invaluable rights which must never be relinquished; and that each man should enjoy equal rights and have identical opportunity for self-realization, as well as, the right of each to receive the same treatment.²¹

The attempts aiming at the definition of the fundamental characteristics of democracy—those enumerated above among them—include conflicting views. There are many among them which are rather yearnings for positive values than the description of the characteristics materialized in reality and necessarily related to the democratic exercise of power. In spite of that, by sorting the common criteria of several authors on the topic, we can ascertain certain ‘fundamental features’ of democracy like: a ‘freely elected parliament’, ‘freedom of speech, freedom of the

¹⁷ J. Biesanz—M. Biesanz: Op. cit. pp. 478—479.

¹⁸ K. Kautsky: *Nemzeti állam, imperialista állam és államszövetség*. (Nation state, imperialist state and alliance of states.) (In Hungarian) *Népszava*, 1915, pp. 14—15.

¹⁹ S. Cripps: Op. cit. pp. 6—7.

²⁰ “A világ ma. A szocialista mozgalom távlatai”. (The world today. The perspectives of the socialist movement.) *Die Zukunft*. January, 1962.

²¹ Ibid.

press, freedom of political association and the rule of law.' The above features are regarded as the criteria of democracy—generalizing the views of public opinion—also by the *Penguin Encyclopedia*, which is meant for the general reader.

The foregoing definitions reflect, first of all, the phenomena of the modern age—certain criteria of the bourgeois or socialist democracy. But the bourgeois and reformist ideologists ignore their real social background and discuss them as the *general characteristics of democracy*.

On the one hand, this approach has the drawback of discussing the characteristic features of "democracy as such". We agree with the opinion of Stuart Chase, an American idealist philosopher and expert on semantics. He writes that if we wish to speak of democracy competently, the first question should be what democracy is it. Where? When? Do we mean political democracy as, e.g., with reference to a nation, or industrial democracy as, e.g., in a trade union or is it social democracy as, e.g., in a club? Is it in Athens in 500 B.C., in the Roman Republic in 100 B.C., the Republic of the Netherlands in 1600, Cromwell's Republic in 1655, American democracy in 1787 or in 1938? The expression "democracy in general" is as misleading as the expression "production in general".²²

On the other hand, the views on the "general characteristics" and "general attributes" of democracy ignore that the allegedly general criteria of democracy are always related to a specific exercise of power by a specific class. This very factor determines the magnitude and the content of the characteristics of democracy and that who and how and to what extent can make use of democracy.

The above authors discuss the characteristic features of democracy independently of the social conditions. They describe a class rule as democratic if all or most of the above rights are (formally) declared and/or (formally) asserted. Needless to say that such an approach is of invaluable use for disguising the anti-people character of capitalist society. Therefore, the capitalists and the bourgeois politicians are interested to popularize the view that "democracy in general" has such "general characteristics" that are obligatory for *all* democratic systems. According to this view, *all* democracies have such common features

²² S. Chase: *The Tyranny of Words*. Harcourt and World Inc., New York, 1938, p. 335.

that should be regarded as superior to the particular characteristics of the individual democracies, first of all, their class content.

Undoubtedly, in the 20th-century bourgeois and socialist democracies, there are some ostensibly similar features in the formulation of human rights, in the evolution and some forms of the functioning of the representative system, in the election principle, etc. These manifestations of democracy are *ostensibly* neutral and without class character. But *in reality* they are far from being independent of the character of the rule. Furthermore, the above-mentioned ostensibly similar characteristics do not mean at all such general features of democracy the one case of which is the bourgeois and the other socialist democracy.

Owing to the different character of the two systems, human rights, the representative system, etc., carry different meanings and functions under capitalism and socialism. Lenin expounded this idea in September 1919, in two drafts for a brochure on proletarian dictatorship. He gave this characterization of the ostensibly common features of the 20th-century bourgeois and socialist democracy: " 'Liberty'... Real liberty for the wage-workers, for the peasants. Liberty for the exploiters. Liberty for whom? Liberty in what?

'Equality'. Equality between the exploited and the exploiter. Equality between hungry and satisfied. Equality between worker and peasant. Equality between whom? In what?"²³ In the second draft Lenin confronted the situation in the period after the Socialist Revolution with the formally declared characteristics of—first of all—bourgeois democracy. "Democracy in concrete terms=... (a) the equality of each citizen before the law.—There is no equality for the exploiter while he is being overthrown... (b) political freedom for each citizen.—There is no political freedom for the exploiters. (c) decision on the basis of the opinion of the majority of the citizens.—No: decision excluding the opinion of the exploiters and *contrary to the opinion of the hesitants*." The essence of formal democracy is decision *by vote*. "In effect, in bourgeois democracy, it is decision *through money*. But after capital is overthrown, it is decision *through class struggle*... Bourgeois democracy=decision by vote, i.e., the formal manifestation of one's will, while the capitalist determinants of will are maintained. Proletarian democracy=decision by a class struggle and civil war against the exploiters... Decision by vote=all men are equal, 'disregarding' wealth, the capital and private

²³ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 30, Moscow, 1965, pp. 85—86.

property. Decision by a class struggle and civil war: first, the yoke of wealth, the capital and private property has to be thrown off. . . . In case of a general good faith, (i.e., in a classless society), in the absence of the exploiters' resistance, decision could be made by vote."²⁴

There is a *third* drawback to discussing the "general" characteristics of democracy: it is an entirely unhistorical approach. It ignores—on the one hand—that the allegedly general criteria and attributes of democracy were totally absent in certain phases of history. For instance, in the ancient democracies there were technical obstacles to, e.g., the freedom of the press, and at that time, the freedom of association in parties and various societies, in the modern sense was unknown.

On the other hand, the alleged "attributes" of democracy are the result of a long evolution, their sum total cannot be found in various stages of history, and sometimes they can be asserted only partially. We share the view of Leslie Lipson, professor of political sciences at Berkeley University, California, on democratic civilization. He writes in his monography: "We tend to forget—if indeed we ever knew—how slowly democracy evolved and how very recently it has matured. In the case of Athens, while the first steps toward a democratic system were taken by Solon in 594 B.C., the second stage did not occur until the reforms of Cleisthenes at the end of that century, and the third phase came after the Persian Wars with the innovation of Pericles and Ephialtes (461 B.C.)." Thus, the democratic government was the result of a 130 years long evolution. "Athens, which was the only important Greek *Polis* to govern itself democratically, attained the height of its power and prosperity between 490 B.C. . . . and 421 B.C. . . . Even in that short period, however, the range of democracy was still severely limited. . . . The *Demos* was far from including the majority of the adult population. The right to participate in politics did not extend, of course, to women or to resident aliens. . . . Nor did the principle of freedom embrace the emancipation of slaves. The *Demos* comprised a much more numerous group than the surrounding aristocracies or oligarchies. But it stopped far short of including the whole mass of people. There is some justice in a historian's comment (F. M. Walker, a renowned scholar on ancient

²⁴ (V. I. Lenin) Ленин, В. И.: Сочинения (Works), Vol. 39, Moscow, 1963, pp. 455—456.

times—A. K.): 'To the Greeks democracy meant, not the overthrow of privilege, but merely the extension of its area.'"²⁵

The democratic institutions of the modern era and of the recent period, as well as, the characteristics of modern democracy are the result of a long evolution. L. Lipson holds the same view: "In the modern history of democracy, it is surprising in retrospect to discover how recent has been the achievement of mass participation in politics. Every one of the countries which today are the prime examples of democracy was governed by an oligarchy at the opening of the nineteenth century."²⁶ Therefore, upon enumerating these historical facts and generalizing them, Lenin concludes: "ever since the rudiments of democracy first appeared in antiquity, its forms inevitably changed over the centuries as one ruling class replaced another. Democracy assumed different forms and was applied in different degrees in the ancient republics of Greece, the medieval cities and the advanced capitalist countries."²⁷ He voices a similar view elsewhere: "the several demands of democracy . . . are not absolute."²⁸

Historical and theoretical research has proved the erroneousness of the view that the particular forms of democracy are nothing but the various realizations of a "general" and "abstract" democracy.²⁹

²⁵ L. Lipson: *The Democratic Civilization*. New York, 1964 p. 79.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 28, Moscow, 1965, p. 464.

²⁸ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 22, Moscow, 1964, p. 341.

²⁹ Certain theorists of Marxist conviction have also embraced the tenet about the alleged abstract and general characteristics of democracy. Thus, e.g., in his article: "State, socialism and democratization"—which, besides, carries several noteworthy thoughts—Zádor Tordai writes that "the particular socialist forms of democracy do not evolve in a vacuum, instead, in the framework of a democratism, which we could describe as general democratism. General, since the character of these forms is determined not by the forms themselves. Therefore, they can serve as a framework for diverse manifestations of democratism and various processes of democratization. The coexistence of these two types of democratism (general and socialist) results in a particular interaction: in part they determine each other's character. The harmony or disharmony between the two types are of great importance for the opportunities of socialist democratization." Z. Tordai: "Állam, szocializmus és demokratizálás" (State, socialism and democratization), *Magyar Filozófiai Szemle*, February 1970, p. 275. This discussion does not shed light on the author's interpretation of the notion of general democratism. Is it a synonym of the shared features of democracies? In that case, it can be general only *conceptually*, but *not in reality*, since the ostensibly common features heavily differ from each other. If general democratism manifests itself *conceptually*, how can it be *one of the types* of democratism—and a *type* comparable with a *real* democratism, socialist democratism—with which socialist democracy

What has been told above does not mean that democratic government eludes any definition and that it is indistinguishable from the autocratic, fascist or military dictatorships. It is indeed possible to ascertain certain features from ancient, bourgeois and socialist democracy that distinguish class dictatorship, based on the democratic exercise of power, from the *above-mentioned forms of rule*. These features are as follows: equality before the law, legal assurances for the observance of the human rights, the opportunity for each citizen (ensured at least formally) to express and assert his views on matters of public interest, majority rule, decision-making by vote, etc.

The similar features of the various democracies do not assume identical and general theoretical functions in the individual democracies, therefore, they are not general criteria of democracy. The real form of these features

should be in concordance. But if general democratism exists *in reality*, if it is a framework for something else, in what form of rule can it be pinpointed?

Zádor Tordai's discussion of general democratism continues by the allegation that it is a prescriptive, determinant factor. "General democratism is the condition of the evolution and burgeoning of the particular socialist forms. General democratism includes the following requisites:

- the open confrontation of the social groupings
 - an ideological struggle fought on a wide front and a principled basis
 - the formulation of the alternatives by broad segments of the society
 - the open character of public administration
 - adequate information made available for the society, for those interested
 - the responsible activity of the mass media
 - the development of a socialist-minded critical attitude
 - the security of the individual
 - the individual should not be left defenseless against the institutions above him."
- Ibid. p. 283.

It is to be welcomed that the author has given a detailed description of general democratism, which he describes as "the condition of the evolution and burgeoning of the socialist democratic forms." However, it can be ascertained from his argument that (1) contrary to his own definition, general democracy is *not only* a framework, which does not determine its character itself, but a phenomenon which does possess a *content*. This content is supposed to *determine* real democratism; (2) that, contrary the author's claim, general democratism *is not general*, since its requirements cannot be fulfilled within the framework of bourgeois democratism; (3) finally: general democratism, as described by Zádor Tordai is—to say the best—a *sum total of norms*, which are considered to be important by him. But in that case it is not a type of democracy which could be compared with socialist democracy, which is a group of real phenomena.

It remains still to be answered where and how can this determinant democratism manifest itself in its generality. How can it act as a condition of socialist democratism?

is determined by the character of the given class rule. The class content of the given democracy determines the ways, the forms and the spheres of how rights are being interpreted and made use of. But however varied the character of democracy may be, there is a qualitative difference between democracy—even in its narrowest form—and autocracy, or other anti-democratic exercises of power.

The above-mentioned manifestations of the democratic character are always a watershed between democratic rule and anti-democratic rule.

Yet, analysing the various democracies, we shall soon be convinced that the ostensibly common denominators of democratic rule extensively differ both in content and range. If we compare the democracies in exploiting systems with socialist democracy, we may find such vast differences that—in the proper sense of the word—it is impossible to speak of the former ones as genuine democracies. Therefore, we can speak of the ‘common’ or ‘similar’ features of bourgeois and socialist democracy only in a limited sense and with great reservations. Yet, on the basis of the real differences between them, we can speak of a fundamental contradiction between them.

3.3. On the People's Rule Character of Democracy

Democracy is a form of rule of certain classes. How is this rule manifested? What are the criteria of a democratic exercise of power?

Some thinkers and politicians, especially among the English-speaking theorists, hold that the crucial criterion of democracy is the consensus, i.e., the approval and agreement of the governed. Therefore, democracy is believed to be a rule exercised with the consent of the majority. This standpoint was voiced first at the time of the English Bourgeois Revolution. In his book A. D. Lindsay quotes the words of Colonel Rainsborough, the leading representative of the Levellers, as said in a meeting of English officers on October 25, 1647: "...every man that is to live under a government ought first by his own consent to put himself under that government and...the poorest man in England is not at all bound in a strict sense to that government that he hath not had a voice to put himself under... Every man born in England, cannot, ought not, neither by the law of God nor the law of nature, to be exempted from the choice of those who are to make laws for him to live under..."³⁰

³⁰ A. D. Lindsay: *Op. cit.* p. 13.

A similar view is expressed nearly 300 years later by Carl L. Becker, a reputed American political scientist. He holds that democratic government means a system in which all, or a considerable part of the citizens have from time to time the freedom to give expression to the common will in a more or less effective way. They may appoint and recall the officers and draft and annul the laws of the community.³¹

As we can infer from this passage, C. L. Becker defines democracy as the manifestation of popular will. But, when reading this ostensibly reasonable and correct definition, one cannot help putting the question: how to discern and interpret this popular will? The bourgeois politicians' answer is that the popular will is manifested best in the elections.

At first sight, this definition of democracy seems to be fully adequate. Indeed, there is no democracy without the assertion of the will of the majority. Generally speaking, democracy is a government with the agreement, consent, approval and endorsement of the majority. The method of ascertaining the common will, the majority will and the consent of the governed by way of—among others—the elections is apparently also correct.

But to say *nothing more* of democracy than it is a government based on the will of the majority, of the people, falls short of a proper definition. *First*, because there are diverse definitions of "the majority", "the people". Which definition is the proper one?

Second, it is not at all easy to ascertain the "will of the people". Since the various people tend to have various wills, no government may undertake to implement the will of each. The "will of the people" can of necessity be manifested only as the will of the majority. But how to establish the will of the majority, the common consent? Ostensibly, the simplest method is to count the wills. "But why," asks with the good reason Ernest Barker, a leading British political scientist, "should the will of a part, however numerous, be identified with the will of the whole"? Elsewhere he asks how is it possible to regard electoral majority—which is formed on the basis of different motivations and by different conditions, and therefore is, rather heterogeneous and temporary—as the manifestation of the popular will.

In quest of the right answer, E. Barker invokes a factor other than the majority consent. He writes: "The answer generally given to that question is an answer which rests on the argument of force. 'We count

³¹ C. L. Becker: *Modern Democracies*. New Haven, 1941, p. 7.

heads instead of breaking them,'” he quotes the popular bourgeois phrase used to describe democracy. “‘The majority would win the day if it came to an actual struggle...’ This reduces the proposition that ‘the will of the people must prevail’ to the simpler but less attractive proposition that ‘the force of the majority of the people must prevail, because, if it were challenged, it would prevail.’ In a word, the basis of democracy becomes force—not actual force, but hypothetical force...”³²

The juxtaposition of majority will and force is controversial at first sight. The coincidence of hypothetical force, manifested in the form of electoral majority, and of real force is often an illusion of bourgeois democrats. In real political life such a combination is never automatic. E.g. the Nixon Administration was in minority in Congress, yet it did wield real power. The majority, reached by “counting the heads” was unable to wield even a hypothetical force. The state of affairs in the United States enables us to give a better explanation of this ostensibly “transcendental” phenomenon than E. Barker’s formal analysis. The majority will prevails if it is backed by force, if it can assert itself. But this explanation transcends that based on the election principle.

Third, what is the true content of the process described as “the agreement and consent of the people?” How does it originate? What does popular consent refer to, asks with good reason A. D. Lindsay. “...that the people shall consent to what the government proposes to do, or that the government shall do what the people want?”³³ In the first case, the masses generally play a passive role, all they can do is to choose between alternatives proposed presented to them. In bourgeois democracies these alternatives are highly limited. They never endanger, in fact, they never touch on the essence of the system of exploitation. In socialism the real alternatives set forth by the government express the interests of the people. The bourgeois way of offering alternatives is inferior to that of the socialist one, even though both claim to be the manifestation of the popular consent.

When speaking of the agreement with the will of the working masses, one has to define the evolution of the unified popular will, which the government shall put into practice. A thorough analysis can point out that the popular “decision” is always the result of an involved process.

³² E. Barker: *Op. cit.* p. 35.

³³ A. D. Lindsay: *Op. cit.* p. 31.

First, the class alternatives are phrased by the most conscious and active members of the classes within the "people". Then these alternatives are diffused within the given class, then spread to the others, and they clash with other concepts. One or another of them will prevail and finally emerge as the popular "decision". Consequently, "the will of the people" is formulated—with respect to the popular interests—by a minority which belongs to the "people", but cannot be identified with the whole. The common will is spread and asserted by this minority. Therefore, from a formal standpoint, the "popular will" means that the majority, the people agrees with the alternatives referred to it and represented by a minority. Thus, the seemingly mystic "majority will", "consent" and "endorsement" have proved to be nothing but a "profane" political process, i.e., the vanguard of the various classes works out the platform and plan of action of the class, which is then brought to victory by the class itself.

Furthermore, there are different interpretations of the majority, the popular consent and agreement. The "silence gives consent" principle may also provide basis for interpreting the passivity of the masses as some kind of consent. It is clear, however that, if the conditions obstruct activity and the expression of opinions, silence never indicates consent.

Furthermore, though both the passive assent to the functioning of a government and an active support to it can be interpreted as a consent to the policy of the government, there is a vast difference between the two types of "assent" and "consent". The foregoing formula is unable to indicate this difference, in fact, it ignores it.

Fourth, the "consent of the majority"—as we could see it above—is manifested in the elections. There is good reason to put the question: why to choose nothing but the elections, i.e., the expression of the majority will at a given time, as the decisive indicator of the majority will? Why not another time? It is widely known that there can be a substantial difference between the real composition of the representation and the opinion at a given time of the majority of the population. Why and how can a *past* majority opinion be regarded as the authentic will of the majority of the *present* and the *future*?

Furthermore, if the elections are regarded as the sole way of expressing the "popular will", the rules of elections assume outstanding significance. In capitalism the election system distorts the "natural" manifestation of the will of the popular majority. S. I. Benn and R. S. Peters write: "...whether 'the people' (or the electorate) wills to be governed by the

Labour or the Conservative Party may well depend on what methods are used for voting and counting votes and on how the constituencies are drawn. The will of the people cannot be determined independently of the particular procedure employed, for it is not a natural will, nor is it a sum of similar wills of persons sharing a common interest, but the result of going through a procedure which weighs some wills against others.”³⁴

In the system of socialist democracy, too, the consent of the governed to the official policy is an essential indicator of democracy. The assertion of the popular will is a fundamental requirement: “the will of the people is the will of God”.

But under socialism, this principle is asserted not only in words but in reality. Its guarantee is the fact that in the socialist system power belongs to the workers. In socialism the community principle that the popular interest is the supreme law can be realized in the interest of not a minority, claiming to be the “people”, but the preponderant majority of the workers. The “popular” decision can express the will of the real majority owing to the fact that *first*, under socialism, the electorate includes almost each adult worker. Thus the popular decision becomes equivalent with the will of the genuine majority.

Second, in the bourgeois democracies, the manifestation of the will of the enfranchised is limited to one single act, i.e., voting, of a festive day, i.e. election day. By limiting the manifestation of the will of the “people” in time, and in range to just few elements, e.g., the act of voting, the exploiters become able to use the mandate, received allegedly from the “majority”, from the “popular will”, as an excuse for their anti-democratic policy, (opposing the will of the real majority) pursued from the day after election day till the next elections. That is why Rousseau said: “The English people think that they are free, but in this belief they are profoundly wrong. They are only free when they are electing members of Parliament. Once the election has been completed, they revert to a condition of slavery: they are nothing.”³⁵

While in the bourgeois political system the act of election is the pivotal element of the manifestation of the popular will, under socialism, the

³⁴ S. I. Benn—R. S. Peters: Op. cit. p. 397.

³⁵ *Social Contract*. Essays by Locke, Hume and Rousseau, With an introduction by Ernest Barker, The World's Classics, No. 511, Geoffrey Cumberlege, Oxford University Press, London—New York—Toronto, 1952, p. 373.

manifestation of the majority consent, the majority opinion is not limited in time. Under socialism the workers may express their will before attentive ears also on simple "workdays". The masses of people receive political education and are encouraged to be politically active. Their opinions are asked about every major issue. Under socialism the opinions of the workers are asked about minor and major social issues. As it was declared by János Kádár, First Secretary of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party in the December 1960 session of Parliament: "If we decide to bring a decision which concerns wide segments of the people—be it received with loud applause or the expression of doubt—at all times and over each issue we bring the decisions in harmony with the will of the masses. We shall not deviate from this road because this is the right communist practice."³⁶

It has to be added that, under socialism, the workers can manifest their will not only by speaking their mind and electing the capable men for office. In this society—for the first time in history—as a consequence of the unity of the social objectives and the workers' essential interests as well as the workers' higher degree of awareness, there have been more and more opportunities for the workers to express their will not only in words but in their everyday activity. As Lenin says: "Real life and the history of actual revolutions show that quite often the 'sympathy of the majority of the working people' cannot be demonstrated by any elections (to say nothing of elections supervised by the exploiters, with 'equality' of exploiters and exploited!). Quite often the 'sympathy of the majority of the working people' is demonstrated *not* by elections at all, but by the growth of one of the parties, or by its increased representation in the Soviets, or by the success of a strike which for some reason has acquired enormous significance, or by successes won in civil war, etc., etc."³⁷

In the "peaceful" stages of the history of building socialism, there are many tangible and eloquent expressions of the popular will. The manifestations of the workers' sympathy and confidence include better work, responsible citizens' acts, and the spontaneous supporting of the government's national or international policies by pledges to raise the production outputs, and other instances of mass action. But the popular will

³⁶ J. Kádár: *A szocializmus teljes győzelméért* (For the Ultimate Victory of Socialism). Budapest, 1962, p. 229.

³⁷ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 30, p. 59.

may also get expression in an objectively apprehensible way in a reduction in the intensity and number of the above-mentioned acts, and the disappearance of their spontaneity. Therefore, the conscious leading forces of socialist democracy are aware that they always have to carefully analyse the workers' response to the social issues and public affairs. The workers' responses are always manifested in concrete deeds. The tangible manifestations of the workers' approval and consent include, e.g., the intensification of the work competition and socialist work group movements, innovation movements the rise in the number of participants in unpaid voluntary work, and the support for campaigns of solidarity with countries abroad, etc. The leading forces of socialist democracy have also to pay attention to the expressions of disagreement with the policies of the leadership, the fall in the intensity of social activity, as well as the spread of formality among democratic methods, etc. In the socialist system, the analysis of these day-to-day acts offers a more adequate assessment of the socio-political opinions of the majority than the elections. The adequate evaluation of these phenomena enables the leaders to shape better the socialist policies to the will of the masses. The workers' everyday acts require greater activity and efforts—on occasions, also personal sacrifice—than the periodic parliamentary elections. Therefore, the majority opinion thus expressed: be it the endorsement of socialism or a negative response to some measures, carries a more precious message than the, otherwise significant, majority rule in the parliamentary elections.

Though the consent to the activity of the government and the resultant identification of its policies with the popular will is an important criterion of democracy, there are others as well. *According to Marxism a fundamental criterion of the people's rule character of democracy, is that a system's activity is aimed at serving the interests of the working people.* Lenin stressed that "power should be judged by actions instead of words". And that "... it is necessary accurately to analyse the question as to how it should be constructed in order effectively to protect the interests of the working people".³⁸

The democracy of the exploiting societies has to emphasize the formal procedures and the reference to the "will of the people", etc., in order to disguise the fact that it does not serve the interests of the majority

³⁸ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 25, p. 296, and V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 24, p. 554.

of workers, of the people; and its structure is meant to make the assertion of the people's interests impossible.

The socialist system and socialist democracy, the fundamental form of its exercise of power, are the only government which promotes and implements the interests of the masses of people through the building of socialism and communism, and the consistent pursuance of the policy of peace and internationalism. The workers' living standard has been increasing as a result of this policy; the precariousness of life has disappeared, and the workers are encouraged by the perspective of a safe future. Socialist democracy is a structure of the state in which preference is given to the workers' interests over any other interests. In which the unwavering assertion of the popular line is ensured by the direct participation of the workers in the governmental process, and the direct or indirect contribution of the masses to the administration of public affairs. That is why it can be said that socialist democracy is the sole genuine rule of the people. It is true with regards to its content: the direction, goals and achievements of its exercise of power. But it is true also of its formal aspect: the mass character of its exercise of power, the organizational pattern which allows the activation of further masses, as well as its institutional guarantees. As a clear expression of the realization of this fact, the broadest masses have identified themselves with the policy and institutions of the socialist system. Consequently, socialism has surpassed the former forms of democratic government also in the measure and way of the popular identification with it.

Chapter 4

The Essential Criteria of Bourgeois and Socialist Democracy

It is clear from what has been said above that *there is no democracy in general, neither are there general and abstract criteria of it, existing independently of the rule of certain classes*. The characteristic features of democracy are linked with the rule of definite classes.

Today there are *two* fundamental types of democracy: *bourgeois* democracy and *socialist* democracy.

Bourgeois democracy, the result of capitalist evolution, historically precedes the latter. Socialist democracy is ostensibly not more than its sequence on a higher stage of development. Thence is the widespread misconception that the archetype of democracy is the bourgeois one, and that all the others, including socialist democracy, are mere consequences, variants. The bourgeois politicians and political scientists take advantage of this misconception, in fact, they claim it to be true.

But in reality, bourgeois democracy is not the prototype of an abstract ideal of democracy, instead, it is a this-worldly real fact. It is a particular form of rule, empirically connected with, and expressing the interests of a class. Bourgeois democracy is the result, first of all, of the class struggle carried out by the rising bourgeoisie against the forces of feudalism. The essential criteria of bourgeois democracy express the political requirements which have been necessary for the untroubled development of the capitalist class. (It has been said above that there were periods when the bourgeoisie favoured the undemocratic forms of rule.) Bourgeois democracy is not an abstract, general and normative form of the exercise of power, to be followed by the rest of the forms of rule. It is not less particular than proletarian democracy, which differs from it and is opposed to it.

Since, however, bourgeois democracy is the first established form of modern democracies—without being the archetype, model and standard of modern democracies—its emergence, evolution and metamorphoses are carriers of *also* some general laws of each democratic exercise of power. *For that reason and in that respect*, certain experiences of bourgeois democracy concerning these questions can serve a basis for the

explanation of the corresponding phenomena in other democracies. Therefore, introducing this mode of the exercise of power we can refer to certain general rules, and discussing the general laws of democracy we can invoke the experiences of the bourgeois democratic form of state.

4.1. On the Characteristic Features of Bourgeois Democracy

The capitalist political system and bourgeois democracy are aiming at furthering the forward development of the bourgeoisie in the political domain. Therefore, most of their political and legal statutes serve that purpose. F. Engels enumerates the following such rules in his article "The *status quo* in Germany": the bourgeois control of the public administration and the legislation; the subordination of the bureaucracy of the customs system to the interests of the capitalist class; such a revision of the legislation, the administration and the judiciary that ensures the defence of publicity for suits on the title to property; the introduction of the jury in criminal suits; permanent bourgeois control over the administration of justice, capitalist control over foreign policy and foreign trade; a general and proportionate sharing in taxation.¹ This is how F. Engels expounds this idea in an earlier article, entitled: "The state of Germany": "The political dominion... (of the bourgeois classes—A. K.) is... of an essentially liberal appearance. They destroy all the old differences of several estates co-existing in a country, all arbitrary privileges and exemptions; they are obliged to make the elective principle the foundation of government—to recognise equality in principle, to free the press from the shackles of monarchical censorship, to introduce the jury in order to get rid of a separate class of judges, forming a state in the state. So far they appear thorough democrats."²

The bourgeois democratic gains are *by-products* of the bourgeois development. Their content is determined by the interests of the rule of the bourgeoisie. This is how F. Engels continues his argument: "But they introduce all the improvements so far only, as thereby all formal individual and hereditary privileges are replaced by the privilege of *money*. Thus the principle of election is, by property qualifications for the right of

¹ K. Marx and F. Engels: *Collected Works*. Vol. 6, pp. 88—89.

² *Ibid.* p. 28.

electing and being elected, retained for their own class. Equality is set aside again by restraining it to a mere 'equality before the law', which means equality in spite of the inequality of rich and poor—equality within the limits of the chief inequality existing—which means, in short, nothing else but giving *inequality* the name equality. Thus the liberty of the press is, in itself, a middle-class privilege, because printing requires *money*, and buyers for the printed productions, which buyers must have money again. . . . Thus the jury is a middle-class privilege, as proper care is taken to bring none but 'respectables' into the jury-box."³

The class interests and the relation of class forces determine the forms of the democratic power system and the range of the civil liberties.

The historical facts attest that in the bourgeois democracies the equality of the citizens, this allegedly general characteristic of democracy, was often disregarded. The victims included members of the working classes, but on occasions, of the non-capitalist landed aristocracy as well. As Lenin put it: "When the bourgeois republicans overturned thrones they did not worry about formal equality between monarchists and republicans."⁴

The right of assembly has always been understood to be an organic part of the allegedly general criteria of democracy. Yet—as Lenin put it: "When the bourgeoisie was revolutionary, they did not, either in England in 1649 or in France in 1793, grant 'freedom of assembly' to the monarchists and nobles. . . ."⁵

Le Chapelier's decree, annulling the workers' right to assemble and to organize was born on June 14, 1791, during the French bourgeois revolution. It declared all confederations of the workers as "an attempt against liberty and the declaration of the rights of man." As K. Marx put it: "During the very first storms of the revolution, the French bourgeoisie dared to take away from the workers the right of association but just acquired."⁶

That the limitation of the right of assembly was not a temporary and emergency measure by the bourgeoisie, which has just gained power, is attested also by the fact invoked by K. Marx: "This law which, by means of State compulsion, confined the struggle between capital and labour

³ Ibid. pp. 28—29.

⁴ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 28, p. 74.

⁵ Ibid. p. 460.

⁶ K. Marx and F. Engels: *Selected Works in Three Volumes*. Vol. 2, p. 125.

within limits comfortable for capital, has outlived revolutions and changes of dynasties. Even the Reign of Terror left it untouched. It was but quite recently (in the early 1850s—A. K.) struck out of the Penal Code.”⁷ The limitation of the working classes’ right of assembly is a typical ruling by the capitalist class. Let us examine it on the example of the trade unions. In his *History of British Trade Unionism*, H. Pelling writes that the workers of England set up various clubs and secret organizations as early as the 17th century. They could function only underground, since any coalition among the workers roused fears, and was treated as potential crime, in fact, revolt.⁸ The author enumerates the government decrees and laws restraining association among the workers. Thus, e.g., in 1718 (75 years after the outbreak of the English Bourgeois Revolution!) a royal decree was issued against the illegal clubs and societies whose activity was aimed at the raising of the wages and the reduction of the working hours. Decrees prohibiting association were issued in 1799 and 1800 ordering strict sanctions against combining “against property.”

In 1824—nearly 180 years after the Bourgeois Revolution in England—a parliamentary committee found that acts formed against workers’ associations had proved to be not effective against the craftsmen’s and wage-workers’ societies. In fact, by outlawing them, they only made the struggle more fierce and had posed a greater danger to the peace of society. Therefore, the committee proposed to repeal the laws against the trade unions struggling for higher wages and shorter working hours.

It propounded the settlement of these issues by voluntary agreement between the employer and wage-worker. The repeal of the Combination Acts, liberalizing the trade union movement, occurred as late as 1824. Yet various obstacles to the freedom of association remained. Even trade-union combination, which was system-immanent and pursued economic goals, was restricted. The legal status of the trade unions was unsettled. Parliamentary struggle for the legal status of the trade unions was launched only in the late 1860’s and early 1870’s.⁹ Only in 1906, i.e., after nearly 35 years, was the Trade Disputes Act passed. As H. Street

⁷ Ibid. p. 125.

⁸ H. Pelling: *A History of British Trade Unionism*. Penguin Books Ltd., 1963, p. 14.

⁹ Ibid. pp. 13—32.

puts it: "it put on a firm basis the unions' freedom of organization."¹⁰ It should be noted here that the government of Edward Heath has recently [in 1972—Editor's note] curtailed the trade unions' rights with the Industrial Relations Act.

Similar phenomena could be seen in the United States. As R. K. Carr, M. H. Bernstein and W. F. Murphy write in their book: "Until the early 1930's, the American employer was almost wholly unrestricted in his dealings with labor unions... governmental regulation of labor ... consisted of court rulings. The extremely restrictive doctrines applied by the courts to employer-employee relations heavily penalized organized labor. ... The most common weapon in labor disputes was the court injunction. Its use in labor disputes was based on the idea that the right to carry on a business is a property right and that a strike, which interrupts a business, does irreparable damage to a property interest. Labor injunctions were widely used between 1890 and 1930."¹¹

The authors relate that the workers' mounting opposition to this practice bore fruit in 1932, in the Norris-La Guardia Act. "It declared that in order to protect the public interest, workers should be free to form labor unions without interference from an employer. ... It... limited the use of injunctions by federal courts against labor unions." Only the Wagner Act, passed in 1935, i.e., 160 years after the victory of the American Revolution, "expanded the public policy of guaranteeing the workers' right to organize and bargain collectively."¹²

Even if labour achieves the right of association, it can seldom assert it. As Lenin wrote it, the freedom of assembly is formal for "... even in the most democratic republic... the rich have the best public and private buildings at their disposal, and enough leisure to assemble at meetings, which are protected by the bourgeois machine of power. The rural and urban workers and the small peasants—the overwhelming majority of the population—are denied all these things. As long as that state of affairs prevails, 'equality', i.e., 'pure democracy', is a fraud. The first thing to do to win genuine equality and enable the working people to enjoy democracy in practice is to deprive the exploiters of all the public and sumptuous private buildings, to give the working people leisure and to see to it that their freedom of assembly is protected by armed workers,

¹⁰ H. Street: *Freedom. The Individual and the Law*. Penguin Books Ltd., 1964, p. 234.

¹¹ R. K. Carr—M. H. Bernstein—W. F. Murphy: *Op. cit.* p. 723.

¹² *Ibid.* p. 724.

not by scions of the nobility or capitalist officers in command of down-trodden soldiers. Only when that change is effected can we speak of freedom of assembly and of equality without mocking at the workers, at working people in general, at the poor."¹³

As L. Lipson puts it: "*The right of suffrage*, admittedly, is not the only test of democracy. But it is certainly one criterion which is fundamental. To speak of the sovereignty of the popular will, the eliciting of consent, given to the movement periodic elections, confrontation of parties in the legislature—all this must be realistically interpreted in terms of the numbers of citizens who are legally entitled to vote in elections of the legislature," he writes discussing the importance of suffrage. "If that right is restricted to a small minority, the other principles (of democracy—A. K.) are a façade behind which an oligarchy stays entrenched. One cannot give the name democracy to a system where a dominant elite arranges its internal affairs democratically, but keeps majority in a subordinate position."¹⁴

How did suffrage evolve in bourgeois democracy? "The process was gradual," states L. Lipson and he proves it with historical facts. "Lewis Namier," the outstanding English historian, "estimated the size of the electorate which . . . in 1761," i.e. 103 years after the death of O. Cromwell, "could vote for members of the House of Commons. He calculated that there were some 160,000 qualified voters in England's forty counties and approximately 85,000 in the 204 English boroughs. 'It would be ludicrous,' he wrote, 'to talk of any kind of 'democracy' in 39 out of the 40 counties. Taking England as a whole, probably not more than one in every twenty voters at county elections could freely exercise his statutory rights, and the county Members . . . constituted the purest type of class representation in Great Britain, to a high degree, of a hereditary character.'"¹⁵ Lipson adds that "in Great Britain, the movement from oligarchical rule to a mass democracy began in 1830 and took a century to complete. Three Acts of Reform (those of 1832, 1867, and 1884) enfranchised the great majority of the adult males. Two more acts (in 1918 and 1928) made the suffrage universal. Judged by this single basic criterion of the right to vote in parliamentary elections, Britain became

¹³ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 28, p. 460.

¹⁴ L. Lipson: *Op. cit.* p. 79.

¹⁵ L. Namier: *The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III*. Vol. 1, pp. 92—93, quoted in L. Lipson: *Op. cit.* p. 80.

a democracy—for men only—after 1884; for the whole adult population, after 1928.”¹⁶

“On the Continent, to pursue this point further, the trend toward mass participation in politics occupied the century between the close of the Napoleonic Wars and World War I.”¹⁷ In most places, L. Lipson goes on, the speed of this process increased only in the last 25 years of the period, i.e., between 1890 and 1914.

“In the United States, because this country... lacked a clutter of traditional institutions...” the extension of suffrage was faster. All the adult males were enfranchised by 1860. In 1860 there were 4,750,000 qualified voters out of a population of 31,400,000.”¹⁸

In the United States the Fifteenth Amendment (1870) to the Constitution gave male Negroes the right to vote. But even today in some of the states, strict voting qualifications debar the Blacks and occasionally the poor white inhabitants of the South, from voting. They include: the literacy test, the grandfather clauses (which restricted the voting right to those who are linear descendants of persons who had the right to vote before 1870), the poll tax, and the Negroes’ exclusion from the direct and presidential primaries.¹⁹ Women were given the vote only in 1920, by the adoption of the Nineteenth Amendment.

Thus, it took suffrage to become universal—at least formally—279 years, after the victory of the English Revolution the “model country” of bourgeois democracy, and “merely” 144 years after the Declaration of Independence, in the United States.

It is clear from the foregoing brief history of the democratic rights that they did not always exist in their present-day form. *The present-day forms of bourgeois democracy are the result of a long and gradual evolution. The privileges of a propertied élite became little by little the rights of broad masses, i.e. one of the characteristics of the capitalism form of rule.*

It is attested by the history of bourgeois democracy that certain criteria of this mode of government have never become universal, even at the *acme* of bourgeois democracy. The range and character have always been determined by the class interests of the bourgeoisie. Democracy has

¹⁶ Ibid. p. 81.

¹⁷ Idem.

¹⁸ At that time in England there were only one and a quarter of a million qualified voters out of a population of 23,128,000. (Cf. Ibid. p. 82.)

¹⁹ R. K. Carr—M. H. Bernstein—W. F. Murphy: Op. cit. pp. 143—147.

always been kept under control in accordance with these interests. It must never endanger the capitalist order, in fact, it has to promote its smooth functioning.

Bourgeois democracy is more progressive than the political systems of the pre-capitalist social formations and the capitalist undemocratic systems. Therefore, Marxism-Leninism has always shown more favour to bourgeois democracy than to the latter ones. It calls for the protection of and support for this democracy—despite its bourgeois character—in its struggle against the autocratic régimes of other exploiting societies and the anti-democratic political systems of non-capitalistic societies.

4.2. On the Characteristic Features of Socialist Democracy

Socialist democracy has been the result of the struggles of the working class and of the victory of the socialist revolution. This form of government is the power-exercising form of the dictatorship of proletariat in the period between the seizure of power and the completion of the building of socialism. During this period socialist democracy is first of all a *workers' democracy*. At a further stage of development, the *working class though it shares power with other forces remains the leading force of society* in the period of the building of communism, i.e., during the emergence of the universal people's socialist state. Consequently, *socialist democracy remains an exercise of power with a class character*. It is *chiefly* determined by the interests, views, norms, outlook, and sense of justice of the working class.

At first glance both bourgeois democracy and socialist democracy express only the interests of a class and are therefore “partial” democracies. Seemingly the only difference is that the first is the form of rule of the bourgeoisie, while the latter is that of the working class. Yet a thorough analysis may prove that the two political systems *involve fundamentally different forms of the exercise of power*.

The workers' democratic rights and democracy as a whole are a subordinate issue for the bourgeoisie.

Socialist democracy—though in itself a product of the socialist revolutionary transformation—is an organic and indispensable element of the socialist power system which the devoted forces of socialism have wholeheartedly and consistently strived to implement. This fact has already

shown that socialist democracy plays a particular and by far greater role in the life of the society than bourgeois democracy.

First, socialist democracy is one of the most important means for activizing the working masses to build the new society, and for making the optimum solution of topical tasks possible.

Second, socialist democracy fulfils a *strategic task* by involving the masses in the administration of public affairs; it promotes the elaboration of the subjective conditions of social self-government. Thereby it furthers the withering away of the state. Owing to these two causes, *socialist democracy is not an accompaniment of peripheric importance of the socialist-communist transformation. Instead, socialist democracy is its inevitable and indispensable concomitant, precondition and means.*

Bourgeois democracy—being the form of rule of the bourgeoisie—expresses at any time *primarily* the interests of a *minority*. Therefore, it needs to be safeguarded against the majority. It inevitably has to restrict the rights, as well as the range and opportunity of the activity of the broadest working masses. Even if bourgeois democracy is widened—chiefly as a result of the struggle of the working classes and strata—, the democratism of this political system remains of necessity narrow and confined. Its reason is that it is a minority rule.

Socialist democracy is of quite another character. In all the industrially developed countries the working class with the semi-proletariat accounts for the preponderant majority of the population. Increasing segments of the other working classes embrace and support the proletariat and its actions, on the strength of the achievements of socialist construction and the enlightening activity of the conscious forces of socialism. Consequently, socialist democracy is a majority democracy both in its *content* and the *mode of exercising power*. It is so even if—mostly immediately after the revolution and generally against the exploiting classes—it is inevitably forced to resort to certain restrictive measures to ensure its security.

Thence it follows that the whole democratic power system can be organized *ab ovo* on a broad people's basis, in the form of mass democracy.

As Lenin said in 1918, this form of exercising power entails "the creation of new forms of democracy, new institutions that embody the new conditions for applying democracy." Yet, as Lenin continued, "proletarian dictatorship must inevitably entail not only a change in democratic forms and institutions, generally speaking, but precisely such a

change as provides an unparalleled extension of the actual enjoyment of democracy by . . . the toiling classes."²⁰

All institutions of socialist democracy are meant to *enlist broad sections of the masses* in exercising power. The other goal is to enable the masses *to determine and control government directly or indirectly*. The result of this policy is that power is exercised directly or indirectly by the masses; and that all the responsible state and social posts are held by workers, who assert the will of those who delegated them, the will of the people.

Socialist democracy—like each democracy—is a political category. It belongs, *first of all*, to the sphere of politics, and *its regulating force is fundamentally political in character*. It should not be inferred however that it is as limited in character as bourgeois democracy. In capitalist society the regulating force of politics is hemmed in by the interests of private property. Politics wields power only outside the factory gate, inside it is brushed aside by the capitalist's interests.

In the intellectual field the case is similar. The freedom of private enterprise is the determinant factor when deciding what to publish, what film to release, what to supply for the broad masses via the mass media, what facilities to ensure for education, how to fix tuition fees, what to offer for leisure, etc. Broad as political democracy may be in some of the capitalist countries, the capitalists' supremacy is unchallengeable outside politics, in the bourgeois order. At the most, the wise criticism of those cases is allowed where this situation caused awry practice, but this criticism is exactly so inefficacious as the indignant attacks, are against these conditions.

In socialism the several spheres of society are less separated from one another. There is less opportunity for the assertion of private interests, at least not for a long time. The socialist system embodies a particular social unity, it is a social organization in which the tendencies toward unity have been dominant since its establishment. For instance, in the course of the revolution, nationalization rapidly takes place in the key economic sectors, the party's leading role and the state interference are asserted in every aspect of life. This facilitates the concentration and utilization of this society's human, material and intellectual resources for a new goal, the building of the new social conditions. This process is sufficient in itself to show that mass democracy can and does go beyond the bounds of the political sphere. The democratic expression of opinion,

²⁰ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 28, pp. 464—465.

the democratic regulation and control extends to several fields within the economic, cultural and social welfare sectors including also management and other types of control.

The forward development of the socialist transformation is accompanied by the strengthening of the tendency of unification. Thus, for instance, the fact that the relations of production, including the property relations, have assumed a socialist character, facilitates the convergence of the isolated and opposing interests, as well as, the mutual assistance on the basis of the harmony of interests. The unity of society is also enhanced by the socialist planned economy, the socialist state organization based on democratic centralism, and structure of the socialist political system. (It is widely, known e.g., that the party has played a considerable unifying role in the life of the society.) The process of unification in the interests and consciousness of the social classes and strata provides a firm and broad basis for the accelerating process of unification within the whole of society.²¹

The increasingly universal homogeneity of the socialist society paves the way for the ever bigger role of the political, i.e., the volitional factor in the extra-political spheres. Furthermore, it facilitates the introduction and effective assertion of the democratic decision-making and democracy to almost each field of social life, naturally in harmony with the laws of the relevant fields.

It is clear from the foregoing discussion that—unlike bourgeois democracy—socialist democracy enables *the workers to effectively express their opinion and assert their will directly or through their representatives not only in the domain of politics, but also in other fields of life*. Therefore, socialist democracy enables them to realize their all-embracing and, in this respect, total rule.

Socialist democracy is a *popular rule ensuring broadest human rights*.

Bourgeois democracy—as we have said it already—declares the equality of the citizens before the law, and it abolishes the privileges inherited from the pre-capitalistic formations. But even the broadest

²¹ This was eloquently illustrated by the events of the inundation of river Tisza in 1971. The relief operations were executed with equipment from the stores of the state, the people's army, enterprises, towns, villages and agricultural co-operatives. They were however treated uniformly as the means of the people. In a similar manner, at harvest time in 1972, when an elemental disaster endangered the harvest in the Transdanubian area of Hungary, the Trans-Tisza authorities joined forces in supplying combines and equipment for drying corn to the afflicted counties.

bourgeois democracy—being a form of state which serves a minority—limits the freedom and democratic rights of the working masses. Therefore, diverse excuses are employed to exclude them from the political and social decision-making process, and to make them passive and indifferent to the social issues.

The reverse is true of the practice of socialist democracy, the rule of the working majority. *It abolishes the statutes which restrict the workers' rights* and in practice exclude them from the management of public affairs *even in the most democratic bourgeois countries*. It puts an end to discrimination on the basis of sex, race, origin, religion or other arbitrary causes, which is common in bourgeois democracies. This practice is expressed in such principles of socialist democracy as "each citizens is of equal rights," and "legality is one and indivisible," and "there is equal treatment before the law for those who govern and the governed," etc.

Bourgeois democracy does away, first of all, with the restrictions in the way of the development of the bourgeoisie, of the capitalist conditions, thence the particular formulation of human rights in negative terms. Mostly, liberty *from* something, and not *for* something. Herbert Aptheker, the reputed Marxist theorist quotes a relevant statement of the former United States Secretary of State, Dean Acheson: "the rights of Englishmen . . . were specific and detailed restraints upon power." Aptheker adds that: "in the classical enunciation of freedoms, the Bill of Rights of the United States Constitution, one finds that these rights are actually an enumeration of those things which the government is forbidden to do."²²

The questions of the realization of (political) freedom, the positive content of freedom, are less important for the bourgeoisie than the liquidation of the curbs on themselves. In fact, it resorts to any means it deems expedient to inhibit the unfolding of freedom and the actions toward it in light of the working masses' struggle in the political domain which may weaken or endanger its economic and governmental positions. This is the chief explanation of the slowness and limitedness of the evolution of the democratic rights under bourgeois rule.

Socialist democracy involves more than liberty *from* something, from the obsolete restraints. On the one hand, this form of rule includes and ensures a wide range of human rights to something, thus to work, to rest

²² H. Aptheker: *The Nature of Democracy, Freedom and Revolution*. International Publishers, New York, 1967, p. 48.

and recreation, to further education, etc. i.e., to the realization of the individual's freedom.

On the other hand, it includes the principle that you cannot get something for nothing: the worker is entitled to his rights according to the disposal of his duties. In other words, there are no rights without the fulfilment of duties, and no fulfilment of duties without the ensurance of adequate rights. As F. Engels said in *A Critique of the Socialdemocratic Draft Programme of 1891*: "Instead of 'for equal rights for all', I suggest: 'for equal rights and *equal duties* of all', etc. Equal duties are for us a particularly important addition to the bourgeois-democratic equal rights and do away with their specifically bourgeois meaning."²³

Human rights have a positive content in two aspects in social democracy.

First, they express more than liberty from a restraint.

Second, most of these rights refer to positive values, they express the right and the duty of an activity essential for the forward development of the society and the individual, and they lead to the all-round, Communist development of the individual.

Third and last, instead of merely formally declaring them, socialist democracy ensures the real assertion of these rights. Thereby it overcomes the contradiction in bourgeois democracy between the declared and the real legal opportunities. In bourgeois society only the propertied class is really able to overcome this contradiction. The working classes are mostly hindered in or even debarred from putting their documented rights into practice by the precariousness of their life, their insufficient material means to exercise their democratic rights, and various other restrictions. It is imperative in socialist democracy to go beyond declaring the democratic rights and opportunities. The expropriation and transfer to the people of the assembly halls, the printing offices and the mass media, the building of socialism as a whole have called into being the essential preconditions for realizing these rights and opportunities. As Lenin writes: "Proletarian democracy suppresses the exploiters, the bourgeoisie—and is therefore not hypocritical, *does not promise them freedom and democracy* but gives the working people genuine democracy. Only Soviet Russia has given the proletariat and the whole vast labouring majority of Russia a *freedom and democracy* unprecedented, impossible and inconceivable in any bourgeois democratic republic, by, for example,

²³ Frederick Engels: Op. cit. p. 80.

taking the palaces and mansions away from the bourgeoisie (without which freedom of assembly is sheer hypocrisy), by taking the print-shops and stocks of paper away from the capitalists (without which freedom of the press for the nation's labouring majority is a lie) and by replacing bourgeois parliamentarism by the democratic organisation of the *Soviets*, which are a thousand times nearer to the people and more democratic than the most democratic bourgeois parliament."²⁴

The above-mentioned characteristics of socialist democracy change with the various periods in the history of socialism. Their range and form always depend on the concrete historical situation. As G. H. Shachnazarov writes: "Socialist democracy could not and did not spring forth fully grown, like Minerva did from Jupiter's head. Being the form of the socialist state, its evolution is a step-by-step process. Solving the tasks of socialist and communist construction and eradicating the burdensome vestiges of the exploiting system from the social conditions and the people's mind, it has been in a process of perfection."²⁵

Especially in the initial stages of its evolution, socialist society is often in real danger by the attempts of the exploiting classes at restoration. Then the conscious forces of socialism have to resort to open dictatorship against the class enemy. Under these circumstances, the human rights and other democratic opportunities of the members of the former exploiting classes are *de facto* or even *de jure* restricted. Thus in 1918, the Soviet government disfranchised these people. But Lenin saw already at that time that: "the question of restricting the franchise is a nationally specific and not a general question of the dictatorship. One must approach the question of restricting the franchise by studying the *specific conditions* of the Russian revolution and the *specific path* of its development. . . . It would be a mistake, however, to guarantee in advance that the impending proletarian revolutions in Europe will . . . be necessarily accompanied by restriction of the franchise for the bourgeoisie . . . it is *not absolutely necessary* for the exercise of the dictatorship, it is not an *indispensable* characteristic of the logical concept 'dictatorship', it does not enter as an *indispensable* condition in the historical and class concept 'dictatorship'."²⁶

²⁴ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 28, p. 108.

²⁵ (G. H. Shachnazarov) Шахназаров, Г. Х.: Социалистическая демократия (Socialist democracy). Politizdat, Moscow, 1972, p. 4.; see also pp. 9—20.

²⁶ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 28, pp. 255—256.

Lenin emphasized that the restriction of the franchise is provisional. Once the conditions necessitating it disappear, it will be abolished.

History has justified Lenin's view.

First, in most of the countries of people's democracy, where the proletariat and the semi-proletariat account for the preponderant majority of the population, the general character of franchise was not restricted at all, i.e., the former exploiters were not disfranchised. In fact, in most of these countries, e.g., in Hungary, it was the people's democratic government which realized the decades old demand of the working class, the universal suffrage.

Second, while in traditional bourgeois democracies, e.g., in England, where it took 279 years after the Bourgeois Revolution to achieve the universal suffrage, or in the United States, where it took 144 years, in the Soviet Union, 19 years after the beginning of the Revolution and 16 years after the end of the Civil War, the Constitution of 1936 ensured universal and equal suffrage, including the former exploiters and those who were fighting against the Soviet system in the Civil War.

The measure of the restriction of socialist democracy depends on the opposition of the exploiters, and on the danger their attempts at restoration involve. The limitation of the rights and opportunities of such people is nothing but a counter-measure against their hostile actions, and also preventive measure against further like actions which might cause extensive damage and demand human lives. It is a universal rule that in a critical situation of counter-revolution or civil war, the forces of counter-revolution must be barred from freedom and democracy. As Lenin wrote: "In which countries, and given what national features of capitalism, democracy for the exploiters will be in one or another form restricted (wholly or in part), infringed upon, is a question of the specific national features of this or that capitalism, of this or that revolution." Then, speaking of the dictatorial measures that are of necessity applied against the bourgeoisie, Lenin stresses that: "the proletariat cannot achieve victory *without breaking the resistance* of the bourgeoisie, *without forcibly suppressing its adversaries*, and... where there is 'forcible suppression', where there is no 'freedom', *there is, of course, no democracy*."²⁷ To illustrate that socialist democracy is not *ab ovo* for restricting the democratic freedoms, let us cite an episode from the history of Soviet Russia. The state monopoly of advertising was at stake. Lenin announced at the

²⁷ Ibid. p. 261.

Seventh Moscow Gubernia Conference of the Party that late in 1917 the Soviet power issued a decree on the state monopoly of advertising. It was clear from the decree that the proletarian state wished to switch to the new socio-economic condition step by step. Instead of banning private publication and enterprise, including advertising, it meant to subordinate them to the state leadership. Those who brought the measure supposed that the entrepreneurs and some proprietors would be obedient to the Soviet government and would accept its conditions. But the events took quite another turn: "the capitalist class, retaliated to this decree of the state power by completely repudiating that state power." Lenin added that, from the viewpoint of its interests, the bourgeoisie responded with the right strategy: "First of all we shall fight over the fundamental issue of whether you are really the state power or only think you are." The answer to this question was given by the civil war. As Lenin continues: "The capitalist class had adopted the tactics of forcing us into a desperate and relentless struggle, and that compelled us to destroy the old relations to a far larger extent than we had at first intended. . . the resistance of the capitalist class compelled our state to shift the struggle to an altogether different plane; not to the petty, ridiculously petty, issues we were naive enough to dabble in at the end of 1917, but to the issue of 'To be or not to be?'"²⁸ Consequently, it is the resistance of the bourgeoisie which compels socialist democracy to enforce restrictions which would not otherwise follow from its nature, and are nothing but the imperatives of self-defence.

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Among others, this was followed by the development of democratic freedoms in the socialist countries. The 1936 Constitution of the Soviet Union already reflected the complete victory of the socialist order and the fact that the foundations of socialism had been laid. This new social situation made it possible to ensure rights in the Constitution hitherto unknown to the world. Already in 1936, the Constitution of the Soviet Union guaranteed the right to work, to material security, to rest, to leisure and to education. The institutional structure of the socialist system with its wide network provided a guarantee for the realization of these rights among the working people.

The 1936 Constitution of the Soviet Union served as an example for the other people's democracies. These countries could start the con-

²⁸ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 33, pp. 90, 91, 92.

struction of socialism under enhanced conditions owing to the constant help of the Soviet Union and the fact that after World War II the progressive forces won the upperhand. These factors enabled these countries to ensure already at the initial stage of their socialist development (right to work, education, etc.) those rights which the Soviet Union could guarantee only after the foundations of socialism were laid.

This fact also proves that under socialism the scope and variety of democratic freedoms does not primarily depend on good will and subjective resolutions, but on the extent to which the conditions enabling these right to become reality actually exist.

Relying on earlier achievements, at the end of the sixties and the beginning of the seventies the majority of the socialist countries could start the construction of developed socialist society, and in the Soviet Union the construction of communism could be continued. Under new circumstances, this situation had a strong influence on the amendments to the Constitutions, the drafting of new Constitutions and also on the codification of the citizens' rights and duties.

The characteristic of the new or amended Constitutions is that rights that have been formerly guaranteed only for the working people, are generally codified as the rights of every citizen. This reflects a result achieved by socialist society, namely that even the remnants of exploitation have been successfully abolished and the social structure and population has become homogeneous.

In the new or amended Constitutions of the socialist countries, the number as well as the content of the citizens' rights has greatly increased in accordance with the results achieved in the construction of socialism. Thus, all the Constitutions of the European socialist countries declare that the workers—apart from the right to work and its just remuneration—have also a right to appropriate work conditions. The Bulgarian Constitutions declares that the workers have a right to safe and healthy work conditions which are being ensured through the introduction of the achievements of science and technology.

Many Constitutions stipulate conditions for the more direct participation of working people in the administration of community affairs: Thus Article 68 of the Constitution of the Hungarian People's Republic stipulates this right in the following words:

"1. Every citizen has the right to take part in the management of public affairs: it is his duty to discharge his public functions conscientiously.

2. The citizens may bring forward proposals of public interest to political and social organizations. They must be judged on their merits."

Articles 48 and 49 of the Constitution of the Soviet Union adopted in 1977 declare: "Citizens of the USSR have the right to take part in the management and administration of state and public affairs and in the discussion and adoption of laws and measures of All-Union and local significance. [...] Every citizen of the USSR has the right to submit proposals to state bodies and public organizations for improving their activity, and to criticize shortcomings in their work.

Officials are obliged, within established time-limits, to examine citizens' proposals and requests, to reply to them, and to take appropriate action."

The most significant growth in the numbers of laws may naturally be observed in the Constitution of the Soviet Union, in which it is emphasized that the Soviet Union has attained the level of developed socialism and the people are directly constructing communism.

At the same time, the new Soviet Constitution is indicative of the further development of socialist democratic freedoms. Therefore, the contents of this basic law have to be examined more thoroughly.

The Constitution adopted in 1977 promulgated the right of the members of socialist society to housing, to rest and leisure, to health care, to the enjoyment of cultural benefits, and furthermore the freedom of scientific, technical and artistic work. A new feature of the Constitution consists in the fact that Article 49 guarantees the citizens' right to submit proposals to state bodies and public organizations and in Article 58 the right to lodge complaints against the actions of officials, state bodies and public bodies. This latter Article also guarantees the right to compensation for damage resulting from unlawful actions by state organizations, by public organizations, or by officials.

The growth in citizens' rights is reflected not only in the fact that, compared to the 1936 Constitution, many new rights have been included, but also in the fact that the *content* of the rights figuring also in the 1936 Constitution has been expanded considerably through the enumeration of guarantees. This development may be illustrated e.g. through the example of the right to education. This right was confined to learning in the 1936 Constitution. The new Constitution differentiated between the right to education and the right to enjoy cultural benefits. Whereas the 1936 Constitution guarantees obligatory *primary education*, the new Constitution guarantees also obligatory *secondary school* education. In 1935 only

six-year-education was free, in 1977 the Constitution promulgated that *all education* is free. In 1936 only *the best student* could get state scholarships, in 1977 *not only the best students could get* scholarships and various other social benefits. The 1936 Constitution guaranteed the right to the free acquisition of *elementary special knowledge*. The 1977 Constitution guarantees the conditions for general secondary vocational training. In Article 45 the 1977 Constitution extends the right to education by guaranteeing correspondence and evening courses, by the provision of facilities for self-education and also by *the free issue of textbooks*. In Article 46, the right to cultural benefits is ensured by the broad access to the values of culture, by developing television and radio broadcasting; by publishing books, newspapers and periodicals, by extending free library service; by the development of the fair distribution of educational and cultural institutions throughout the country; and by expanding cultural exchanges with other countries.

In the new Constitution rights are included which point to the future, to the realization of Communist society. Among these rights, we find first of all the right to work which includes the citizens' right to choose their trade or profession, type of job and work in accordance with their inclinations, abilities, training and education, with due regard to the needs of society. Contribution is made to the emergence of communist self-government by the increased activity of Soviet citizens which is promoted by the codification of the right to take part in the administration and management of state and public affairs, the right to submit proposals and by the extension of the jurisdiction of the working people's organizations.

The new settlement of the citizens' rights reacts at several points to the requirements of the present age. Thus, several socialist Constitutions include among the rights and duties the protection of the natural environment as well as the preservation and further increase of cultural values. Modern working and life conditions tend to increase the mental and physical burdens on the individual. To countervail this, Article 42 of the Constitution, dealing with the right to health protection, formulates this right in a very broad manner. Besides free medical care and the development and improvement of safety and hygiene in industry, also environment protection and broad prophylactic measures are mentioned.

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On examining and evaluating the development of democratic freedoms, it immediately turns out that *the main trend of evolution points to the constant enrichment of democratic freedoms*. To be sure, development in this respect was not even. Partly the cult of personality, the danger of war or war itself and partly accidental and very often subjective causes hindered development. However, the main tendency has been *the extension and improvement of these rights*.

The various possibilities and rights of the working people do not come to realization by merely being codified. Regulation itself is no guarantee for these rights to become live and organic parts of socialist democracy and life.

The socialist settlement of the citizens' rights becomes reality only when this settlement is actively realized by the workers of socialist society.

Therefore, socialist consciousness as well as the self-governing activity of the workers ensuring the optimal development of rights are badly needed.

The unfolding and purposeful mobilization of this process is assisted by the leading force of socialist society, the communist Party. The Party induces all conscious socialist forces of society, the social organizations, the mass movements and also the socialist state to act in this spirit.

This living activity of the people has changed the letter of law into living reality, and it is this activity which is capable of overcoming both objective and subjective obstacles to the enforcement of rights. Objective obstacles consist in actually existing contradictions impeding the unfolding of freedom, whereas subjective ones consist in the conservatism; in routine actions; in a way of thinking rendering the assertion of rights but formal, in the development of partial interests running counter to those of the community; and in the restrictions imposed by authoritarian managers afraid of the workers' self-government etc.

Therefore, the decisive guarantee for the realization of the provisions included in the codifications of the Constitution and the democratic rights is ensured by the level of consciousness and by the independent activity of the working people of socialist society.

Once socialist democracy is consolidated, the democratic opportunities and freedoms are generously ensured for each and all, usually without any legal restrictions and stipulations. It is of course another question that—just like in any other system—socialist democracy is never allowed to be a means to weaken or overthrow the social order.

Socialist and, even more so, communist construction and the resultant social transformations increasingly ensure democratism and the citizens' equality and equal opportunity to become reality and not only declared terms. Thus the contradiction between *citoyen* and private individual is gradually resolved.

The survivals of social inequality in socialist democracy result in the remaining difference between *citoyen* and *self-interested* private individual. Yet it seldom develops into a conflict, almost only in the case of people who stick to the old conditions and to their old views and way of life. In the socialist system persistent and successful efforts have been made to eliminate these differences. The *de jure* communal man *can de facto realize himself as a community individual in each essential spheres of social life* due to the following reasons: his working and living conditions undergo a radical transformation, his awareness and activity grow, and that socialist democracy offers ever more opportunities and an ever growing field for his participation in the administration of community affairs. In socialist democracy the individual may realize himself without infringing upon his being a community individual. In addition to that, the communal character—unlike in the democracy of exploiting societies—does not require the renunciation of his own interests and personal character. On the contrary, it assists to unfold them.

On the one hand, socialist democracy—as we saw it above—grants each citizen the democratic opportunities and rights in a comparatively short time. On the other hand, it gradually ensures that the people may in reality exercise these rights.

Thus socialist democracy enlarges the dimensions of the democratic exercise of power to such an extent, and lends democracy such a content that could never be experienced in the earlier forms of democracy. These facts have proved the unfoundedness of the bourgeois accusation that socialist democracy is “illiberal”, and that it is by far more limited than the bourgeois exercise of power.

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The enumeration of the characteristic features of bourgeois and socialist democracy, the brief comparison between their like criteria, have also shown that, without exception, the character of various class rules determines the criteria of democracy, their content and meaning, and the vistas they open.

The aforesaid arguments might convince the reader that one should avoid defining the characteristic features of a democracy without specify-

ing its class character. It has also to be avoided to consider a concrete form of the democratic exercise of power of a given class rule as a general and eternal manifestation of democracy. Thus the historical conditions must never be ignored. The criteria of the democratic rule of a given class are always characteristic of the exercise of power of the given class. We consider them to be the essential criteria of the different class democracies.²⁹

There are criteria which differ from the essential ones. They appear linked to specific events of the historical development and they are existing or surviving only for a certain period. Furthermore, the steady features—which are relatively independent from the ephemeral conditions—tend to change themselves. Their weight, role and significance change with the historical circumstances. The same criterion may cause so great differences and may manifest itself so differently under the differing historical conditions that the difference is ostensibly qualitative. It follows from the foregoing discussion that the individual characteristics of democracy have to be analyzed and described with an utmost thoroughness and the minute enumeration of the concrete forms.

²⁹ A more detailed discussion is devoted to the several essential criteria of democracy in a separate chapter.

Part Three

**On the Essential Features
of the Democratic Exercise
of Power**

Democracy, as the form of rule of given social classes, is always manifested in the following *concrete phenomena*: *certain principles of government, the existence of state and other institutions, their determined interrelation, the rights of the ruling class and those classes which are engaged in the exercise of power, the precisely defined and enforced scope of action of those excluded from power*. As we have already mentioned it, a democratic class rule may be realized in various concrete forms. These forms may carry ephemeral and casual features, or those which are typical characteristics of the given social system. The latter constitute the essential features of the always concretely manifested democratic exercise of power.

The term "the essential features of democracy" involves a *set* of features determined by the character of a concrete class rule, i.e., a particular syndrome. Some of the features might for a time appear in such a rudimentary form that they seem to be missing. Yet, as a rule, these criteria concur with the given system, they tend to occur only together. Thus, owing to the relatively large number of those belonging to the ruling class and of those participating in the exercise of power, the principle of the democratic *representative system* characterizes bourgeois democracy, while, e.g., the democracy of the ancient Athens bore another character. Although the representative system of the early bourgeois evolution, which was highly restrictive and excluded the majority, is heavily different from the one—achieved through the struggle of the masses—at a later stage of bourgeois history, which allows a broad and proportionate representation, it is evident that there is no bourgeois democratic rule without the application of the principle of representation.

No essential criteria of the democratic rule of any class can be neglected for a long time without jeopardizing the rule of the given class. Thus, e.g., the enlisting of broad masses in the running of the state is an essential criterion of socialist democracy. Suffice it to cite the historical experiences of the era of personality cult. Deviation from the principle and practice of *mass democracy*, the switch to a paternalistic mode of government, which wishes to solve the problems of socialism without the masses, inevitably incur dangerous and harmful consequences.

An attack against the typical characteristics of the democratic exercise of power of a class, of necessity endangers the given class rule. The genuinely proletarian broadening of the strongly limited bourgeois democracy is equivalent with the transformation of quantity into quality. As Lenin writes, evaluating the measures of the Paris Commune: "democracy, introduced as fully and consistently as it is at all conceivable, is transformed from bourgeois into proletarian democracy; from the state. . . into something which is no longer the state proper."¹

The essential features of the democratic exercise of class rule constitute a determined structure. In his thesis *On the Jewish Question*, K. Marx points out that the so-called human rights are in part political rights, which are exercisable in the political community, and are in part "the rights of *the* man", the rights of the egoist, the man who is separated from the community. Rights which turn people against one another and regulate this process. In capitalist society—writes Marx—"the sphere in which man acts as a communal being is degraded to a level below the sphere in which he acts as a partial being. . ."² Sometimes certain essential criteria, e.g., organizational principles or forms of various class rules show considerable likeness, (such are the principle of election, the proclamation of equal rights, etc., to be found in both bourgeois and socialist democracy). Owing to the specific structure of democracy, however, the similar features differ in their place, role and importance in the various class rules. Therefore, if two democracies have antagonistic class characters, there can be no transplant of certain seemingly desirable and useful elements from the one to the other.

This truth is ignored by the proponents of the so-called "reform" of socialist democracy. They urge the immediate adoption of bourgeois-democratic policies organizational principles and procedures and, thereby, the "supplementation" of socialist democracy with bourgeois democracy. They miss the debates and confrontations of the bourgeois political arenas, e.g., the parliament, political public life and consequently describe socialist democracy as "drab" and "unimaginative". Though we admit that the practice of socialist democracy is often stereo-

¹ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 25, p. 419.

² K. Marx and F. Engels: *Collected Works*. Vol. 3, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1975, p. 164. In countries of bourgeois democracy, the bourgeoisie attaches the greatest importance to the problem of property and a rule based on wealth. These issues are to be given a more detailed discussion later.

typed, drab and unattractive, the above "criticism" and the ensuing "proposals" are based on the misinterpretation of facts. Under capitalism the passionate and dramatic conflicts are the expression of essential, often antagonistically opposing interests. In fact, the clash between antagonistic interests—the fierce political struggle—is one of the characteristics of bourgeois democracy.

Thorough research on the political practice of the capitalist countries has established, however, that—as Lenin put it—the bourgeois parliaments "never decide important questions under bourgeois democracy, they are decided by the stock exchange and the banks."³ There is agreement over the major issues, the spectacular political debates raise the minor ones. The low-keyed debates are presented sensationally to divert attention from the consensus over the pivotal issues and, thereby, to manipulate the broad masses.

There is a fundamental coincidence of interests under socialism. Therefore, the "grand" and "life-or-death" political struggles are absent. The effective representation and assertion of the genuine interests are effected through rational consideration and co-ordination, and not through showy battles of words, newspaper campaigns and extreme manifestations of the political struggle. To achieve success, the conflicts have to be revealed and resolved, instead of being exacerbated. Under socialist democracy—which is a superior form of democracy—the differences of interest between the socialist-type classes and strata are settled peacefully, without spectacular contentions.⁴

The essential criteria of the classes' democratic exercise of power are always manifested in historically concrete forms. Yet they must not be wholly identified with the several *concrete* democratic measures, organizational patterns and methods, in other words, the substantial elements must not be confused with the accidental ones. The latter may be, *on the one hand*, the positive or negative results of the concrete historical circumstances, the given relation of class forces and, *on the other*, of the subjective decisions of members of the ruling class or their henchmen. (Let us provide an example of the first-mentioned results: in Russia after February 1917, the bourgeoisie could do nothing but reconcile itself with the dual power, as it is called; and a specific political structure was called

³ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 28, p. 247.

⁴ Neither are the differences within the ruling class resolved in open and publicized battles under capitalism. As a rule, they are settled behind the scenes.

into being to institutionalize the relation of the different classes and organs.) To illustrate the latter factors, let us invoke the imperfections and mistakes in the governments of the ruling class, of which Lenin wrote that the "political evils represent a departure from democracy".⁵ The essential criterion of democracy, the democratic exercise of power, is a comprehensive term: it may cover a broad range of concrete forms from the optimum ones to the seriously wrong ones.

Though the essential features of the democratic rule of different classes determine the concrete patterns, content and extent of democracy only roughly, they cannot be discussed separately from the concrete manifestations of democracy. Due to certain causes, the wrong forms of democracy may distort the essential features of rule, may hinder the functioning of the class rule, and may mislead the analyst. As S. Cripps writes of the political constitution of England at his time: "The forms in which we experience democracy may be relatively unimportant provided they do not prevent the true principles from being operative. They are, however, of the most tragic importance when, as to-day, by their rigidity and conservatism they destroy the very principles they are supposed to embody."⁶

The adequate concrete forms of democracy have a reverse influence. They facilitate the unfolding of the class power, embedded in the given mode of rule, and help satisfy the interests of the class in power.

⁵ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 23, p. 72.

⁶ S. Cripps: *Op. cit.* p. 19.

Chapter 5

On the Essential Features of the Bourgeois-Democratic Exercise of Power

We have already mentioned that—as F. Engels put it—the political rule of the bourgeoisie is “essentially liberal in its manifestation.” The achievements of bourgeois democracy include: the abolishment of all the hereditary privileges of nobility and other pre-capitalistic privileges; equality before the law; the declaration of human rights; the publicity of court trials, and the bourgeois representative system. These progressive measures are to safeguard the privileges of capital. Availing themselves of the bourgeois institutions and exercising the democratic rights, the members of the propertied class are in an advantageous position thanks to their financial status.

The above features are, of course, among the typical criteria of the bourgeois-democratic exercise of power. Yet it is typical of the ruling system of the bourgeois democracy that these bourgeois achievements differ in their value and the role they play in the exercise of power. Already Marx pointed out that, e.g., the democratic freedoms, i.e., the rights of the individual as a communal being are degraded to the rights of “the” man, i.e., the propertied and egoistic individual. Similar is the case with the legal safeguards of the several rights. Bourgeois democracy cannot and does not do more than acknowledges the citizens’ equality, it pays a lip service to the citizens’ rights. The right of property is the only one which enjoys more than a formal admittance. It is defended. In fact, a minutely elaborated system of regulations—including some draconian ones—has been drawn to safeguard property. Thereby the state, which has been so eager to appear as a people’s state, objectively admits that it represents the interests of the proprietors. It grants the proprietors the “right” to surplus, a right which excels the rest, since it is not only documented but also effectively implemented in practice.

A related substantial feature of bourgeois democracy is that the citizens’ equality and freedom differ in weight. The first is usually subordinated to the latter. As K. C. Wheare, the reputed professor of constitutional law of Oxford writes: “In a democracy men often love equality more than liberty, and if need be they will throw away liberty to secure

equality.”¹ If the democratic government is a constitutional government, it has to preserve liberty, writes the author, defending bourgeois democracy. He adds that democracy as it is understood in, e.g., the United States and the British Commonwealth countries, means liberty and it really favours liberty. If it comes to choosing between them, it subordinates liberty to equality.

What does the liberty mean which under bourgeois democracy is held in a higher esteem than equality? It will be recalled that in the view of de Tocqueville—who holds that there is an antinomy between equality and liberty—liberty means free individual enterprise and the liberty of the individual to act independently of the community. Tocqueville is not alone with his belief. Liberty is separated from and confronted with equality by quite a few bourgeois theorists.

This interpretation of liberty is typical of the 18th-century framers of the American Constitution.²

Let us quote here the highly successful monograph of Richard Hofstadter, professor at Columbia University, which has had fourteen editions. As he writes in *The American Political Tradition*: “The men who met at Philadelphia (he speaks of the Constitutional Convention—A. K.) were not interested in extending liberty to those classes in America, the Negro slaves and the indentured servants, who were most in need of it... Nor was the regard of the delegates for civil liberties any too tender. It was the opponents of the Constitution who were most active in demanding such vital liberties as freedom of religion, freedom of speech and press, jury trial, due process, and protection from ‘unreasonable searches and seizures’. These guarantees had to be incorporated in the first ten amendments because the Convention neglected to put them in the original document.” What was then the liberty which was hoped

¹ K. C. Wheare: *Modern Constitutions*. Oxford University Press, London—New York—Toronto, 1966, p. 139.

² These politicians and theorists wrote of the “secrets” of bourgeois-democratic government openly, realistically and unequivocally. The writings of the classics of American political thought—the here-quoted passages among them—have not become respected and superseded fossils of the past. Even today they are seen as manifestations of “statesman’s wisdom,” and are quoted quite often by—chiefly the English-speaking—writers on politics. They are published and republished in books and periodicals. Their influence therefore has not decreased. As a living tradition they are having an impact on contemporary political thought and, thereby, the political process. For this reason, we are going to offer ample quotations from them in order to elucidate bourgeois-democratic rule.

for by the bourgeois politicians and theorists, who dominated the Constitutional Convention?³ In Hofstadter's view: "the liberties that the constitutionalists hoped to gain were chiefly negative. They wanted freedom from fiscal uncertainty and irregularities in the currency, from trade wars among the states, from economic discrimination by more powerful foreign governments, from attacks on the creditor class or on property, from popular insurrection."⁴ S. K. Padover describes this approach more briefly. He writes that the "aim of the delegates was the construction of a political framework that would both protect property against revolutionary expropriation and secure liberty from a potentially tyrannical government."⁵

There is a common element in all the bourgeois democracies: the content of fundamental legitimate order is identical: the liberty espoused by the "Founding Fathers" the bourgeoisie and its advocates in various countries is "the liberty of property, the liberty of the unrestrained assertion of the proprietors' interests". As Hofstadter aptly writes: "The Convention was a fraternity of types of absentee ownership. All property should be permitted to have its proportionate voice in government. Individual property interests might have to be sacrificed at times, but only for the community of propertied interests. Freedom from property would result in liberty for men—perhaps not for all men, but at least for all worthy men . . . Among the many liberties, therefore, freedom to hold and dispose property is paramount."⁶

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The typical criteria of the bourgeois-democratic exercise of power include the governmental principles, policies and institutions which are to facilitate the smooth exercise of bourgeois power.

Here belongs a regulation of differing interests which is to assure the security of the capitalist system. As James Madison, a classic of American

³ It is widely known that well-to-do manufacturers, merchants and landowners accounted for 49 out of the 55 delegates to the Convention. Thus the propertied classes were represented the most heavily. There was only one small farmer (two per cent of the delegates) among the remaining six delegates, even though the small-farming strata was the most populous one in the country. (Cf.: R. Hofstadter: *The American Political Tradition and the Men Who Made It*, Vintage Books, New York, 1961, p. 15; and S. K. Padover: *The Living US Constitution*, Mentor Books, 1953, p. 22.

⁴ R. Hofstadter: Op. cit. p. 11.

⁵ S. K. Padover: Op. cit. p. 9.

⁶ R. Hofstadter: Op. cit. pp. 11—12.

political thought in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, puts it: "From the protection of different and unequal faculties of acquiring property, the possession of different degrees and kinds of property immediately results; and from the influence of these on the sentiments and views of the respective proprietors, ensues a division of the society into different interests and parties." They are bound to clash, and their opposition is to result in hostile sentiments and violent conflicts, Madison writes. "The regulation of these various and interfering interests forms the principal task of modern legislation, and involves the spirit of party and faction in the necessary and ordinary operations of the government."⁷

It is possible to repress one or another of the conflicting interests temporarily, under capitalism. But the time may come when a particular interest has strengthened to such an extent that it must be admitted, and when it is dictated by the *raison d'état* and the interests of the ruling class to let it appear in the political arena. This is how political pluralism becomes one of the characteristics of bourgeois democracy. Political pluralism is the manifestation in the political domain of the pluralism of interests and wants. First it takes hold only within the propertied class, but then spreads beyond that. The struggle of the exploiting and the exploited classes is among its originating factors.⁸

The essence of political pluralism is, according to Karl Loewenstein, an American professor of constitutional law, "the unfettered participation of the most diversified plural groups (i.e., interest groups—A. K.) in the political process. All relevant social forces are granted, in the open power circuit of values, the freedom of competition. The free interplay of the plural groups corresponds to the principle of shared power. The policy decisions of the constitutional power holders are the compromise of the conflicting aspirations of the plural interests of society. By a variety of techniques, their policy goals are brought to the recognition of the government, the parliament, the electorate, and public opinion. The principle of the plural organization of society is constitutionally guaranteed by the civil liberty of free association, limited only by the requirements of public order and the security of the state."⁹

⁷ *The Federalist Papers*; Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, John Jay. Mentor Book, 1963, p. 79.

⁸ However old the phenomenon is, the term appeared in the bourgeois political lexicon after World War II.

⁹ K. Loewenstein: *Political Power and the Governmental Process*. Phoenix Books, The University of Chicago Press, 1965, p. 346.

Some of the major characteristics and procedures of the "pluralistic" political system had evolved by the time of Madison. They included the dominant role of the interests of capital and assured representation of the interests of all the other proprietors. As R. Hofstadter writes, it was an undisputed principle that the influence on the government had to be proportionate with property: the merchants and landowners should dominate, yet small proprietors should be granted independent and no small opportunity to voice their opinions. He quotes J. Madison as saying that: "the interests and rights of every class should be duly represented and understood in the public councils."¹⁰

This "generosity" has always served definite political goals of the bourgeoisie. One of the goals has been to integrate the petty bourgeois and working forces into the existing political system through the system of representation and, thereby, to widen the political basis of the *régime*. The underlying principle of this "concession" has been the desire that the interaction of the several social forces should have a neutralizing effect, thereby calling forth a state of balance, which is favourable for bourgeois rule. J. Madison held the view that such a "natural" government must be so constructed "that its several constituent parts may, by their mutual relations, be the means of keeping each other in their proper places."¹¹

Urging the establishment and maintenance of the United States, Madison argued that the smaller the society was, the easier was to form a majority which oppresses the rests of the citizens. "Extend the sphere, and you take in a greater variety of parties and interests; you make it less probable that a majority of the whole will have a common motive to invade the rights of other citizens; or if such a common motive exists, it will be more difficult for all who feel it to discover their own strength and to act in unison with each other."¹²

Political "pluralism" is not decisively the manifestation of the *various class interests*. Under conditions of capitalism, the dominant role is played by organizations and trends which stand on the basis of the existing system and offer alternatives serving the system. Thus the mass of people and even the workers may voice agreement or disagreement; they may express their opinions or discontent mainly within this cap-

¹⁰ R. Hofstadter: Op. cit. p. 14.

¹¹ Ibid. p. 8.

¹² *The Federalist Papers*, p. 83.

italist framework. These organizations are in most cases the sole vehicles of their political activity. If, therefore, the average man under capitalism—who has not embraced the ideas of socialism—disagrees with the existing political conditions or the decisions of the government, he may not and usually does not do more than shifts his support to another bourgeois political line, organization or movement, momentarily in opposition. Consequently, the path the masses have to follow is in compliance with capitalist interests. Their active actions may apply only determined methods, and thus the masses may choose only among extremely limited alternatives.

This political structure lends the bourgeois system a great deal of flexibility and mobility. The popular will is ostensibly allowed to freely manifest itself when an unpopular party or ineffective government is voted out of power. Yet any of the alternatives serves the interests of the ruling class, the difference being only formal. Attention is diverted from the real cause of the political “mistakes” and “abuses”, the bourgeois interests in the following way: the malcontent masses lay blame solely on one or another group of the advocates of the ruling class interests: the ruling government or its henchmen. The consequent removal of the government gives the illusion of a radical change. This method has been instrumental in defending the capitalist system from discontent of the masses. K. Marx writes of this form of rule that the oligarchy does not perpetuate itself by holding power always *in the same hand*, but by holding it now in this hand, now in the other.

The “political pluralism” of the capitalist system allows the assertion of the various interests between strictly-defined limits and only through certain institutions. These limits must not be transgressed. Any attempt to endanger the system by forces with a class basis which is antagonistically opposed to the existing conditions, is cruelly put down by the police institutions of the capitalist system. This practice of government was provided a theoretical foundation by Edmund Burke in the 18th century. This is how H. Aptheker writes about Burke’s analysis of the evolving English party system: “What Edmund Burke suggested was the co-existence of multiple parties, on the basis of two common points of agreement, namely, loyalty to the private ownership of the means of production and to the symbol of the Crown.”¹³ On condition of their unequivocal stand over these issues, the organizations of the propertied

¹³ H. Aptheker: Op. cit. p. 34.

classes were legally empowered to combine freely. "Any political party or grouping which did not agree to these fundamentals would not be a bona fide political party, but would rather be a seditious organization,"¹⁴ and would be treated accordingly. Burke's view on political pluralism does not stand alone: over 150 years later E. Barker took a similar stand, though his style is more complicated. That the diverse groups are allowed to operate freely—writes Barker—does not mean their being left entirely alone by the state. "On the contrary, the State will leave groups free only if, in the first place, they respect freedom in themselves, and if, in the second place, they respect it in the State. The freedom of the social group is not an absolute freedom. It exists in conjunction with, and it must act in relation to, the liberty which exists in the area of the State. Nor, again, is the liberty of the social group identical in kind with the system of civil and political liberty which belongs to the State... It is a liberty of voluntary co-operation for the attainment of some particular social purpose. It does not involve or imply the existence of a second State which is the parallel and therefore the rival of the existing State... If social groups be thus regarded, not as alternative or opposing States of equal dimensions and like claims, but as voluntary societies in another dimension and with different claims," stated Barker in an ornamented style the prohibition of action against the order of state and society, then "we shall escape that problem of the separation and demarcation of liberties."¹⁵ Thus the author is silent about the consequences of disloyalty. The tactful and refined expression: "the problem of the separation and demarcation of liberties," refers to nothing else but the oppression or, in an extreme case, open terror, which the exploiting class would apply against the labouring classes when it deems that the given social group is not satisfied with "the attainment of some particular social purpose", and jeopardizes the power of the ruling class.

It is clear from both the plain-spoken and the sophisticated arguments that the political pluralism of bourgeois democracy is the product of not the "generosity" of the ruling class, but of certain objective circumstances. It is a scope of action gained by the struggle of classes and strata. It is not aimed at ensuring the free expression of opinion and the assertion of interests but, in the first place, at utilizing even this difficult situation for the good of the capitalist system. Therefore, it is the interests of the

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ E. Barker: *Op. cit.* p. 24.

ruling class which determine its boundaries, and the direction of the forces moving within the system of "pluralism". No analyst of the ostensibly attractive "pluralism" of bourgeois democracy—which enjoys the support also of some of the sincere advocates of democracy—should ignore these considerations, since they serve the only adequate basis for a right conclusion.

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Quite often the political pluralism of bourgeois democracy is identified with the multi-party system of the capitalist system. Undoubtedly, the operation of several parties *might be* the manifestation of political pluralism. But the two notions are not equivalent, not synonymous. On the one hand, there is political pluralism without a multi-party system. On the other, the existence of several parties does not necessarily mean political pluralism.

It is attested by historical facts that there was a time in the earlier phase of capitalism when various interest groups did not have to organize a political parties to defend themselves, which means that "pluralism" existed well before the emergence of modern multi-party system as an expression of conflicting interests. The phenomenon met with the approval of the early exponents of the bourgeois system. It is a widely known fact of the history of the United States that—as Leo Pfeffer writes—"the political associations known as political parties were looked on by suspicion and mistrust by many of the founding fathers, and Washington in his Farewell Address warned against 'factions' in the political life of the new nation."¹⁶ In their monography on American democracy Carr, Bernstein and Murphy write that "the Constitution is entirely silent about political parties, and such all-important matters as presidential nominating conventions, direct primaries, caucuses, party committees and officers, and all the other details of party machinery and procedure."¹⁷

The views of the Founding Fathers exerted an influence on American politics for a long time. As H. Aptheker writes: "When Jefferson went about organizing his political opposition to Hamilton, and of course did it in the form of a political party, he did this secretly and bound his friends, like James Madison, to the keeping of that secrecy. This is why one does not find the open acknowledgement of the existence of political

¹⁶ L. Pfeffer: *The Liberties of an American*. The Beacon Press, 1963, p. 110.

¹⁷ R. K. Carr—M. H. Bernstein—W. F. Murphy: *Op. cit.* p. 156.

parties as such in the United States until 1816"—i.e. for a period of 40 years after the Declaration of Independence—A.K.—“when the first explicitly labelled national convention of a political party was held.”¹⁸

The situation remained much the same even after the above-mentioned Hartford Convention. As late as the 1830s, in his book on American democracy de Tocqueville wrote that: “Great political parties, then, are not to be met with in the United States at the present time... In the absence of great parties, the United States swarm with lesser controversies; and public opinion is divided into a thousand minute shades of difference upon questions of detail.”¹⁹ What are the minor parties good for? The author has a low regard of them. He writes that ambitious men, have to know how to organize a party, for it is not easy to get in the place of those in power. It can be inferred that the associations of the 1830's were not parties in the proper sense.²⁰

The two-party system had evolved in the United States by the 1850s.

Similar was the case in England. As H. Aptheker writes: “The modern political party did not appear until the reign of George III, that is the middle of the 18th century”.²¹ (In other words, 100 years after the English Revolution.) Among the dominions organized after the British pattern, in New Zealand, the two-party system evolved between 1856 and 1876, and minor parties were born in the beginning of this century. In Canada and Australia, the present system of political parties came into being in the last decades of the past century.²²

In Scandinavia, too, the parties we know today came into being relatively lately. In Norway the opposition started to organize a party in 1869, and it scored its first major victory in 1884. For the first time in the history of the Scandinavian countries, between 1893 and 1895, the Norwegian legislation gave a legal status to the multi-party system. The institutions of the parliamentary system, and the political parties acquired legal status in 1901 in Denmark and in 1905 in Sweden.²³

How can the fact be explained that for a long time the bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie were almost entirely indifferent to association in parties? F. Engels answered this question in his article: *The Fate Trial*

¹⁸ H. Aptheker: Op. cit. pp. 36—37.

¹⁹ A. de Tocqueville: Op. cit. Vol. I. pp. 225—226.

²⁰ L. Lipson: Op. cit. p. 346.

²¹ H. Aptheker: Op. cit. p. 32.

²² L. Lipson: Op. cit. pp. 332—333.

²³ J. A. Lanwerys ed.: *Scandinavian Democracy*, Copenhagen, 1958, pp. 97—100.

at Cologne. "No political party can exist without an organization; and that organization which both the liberal bourgeois and the Democratic shopkeeping class were enabled more or less to supply by the social station, advantages, and long-established, everyday intercourse of their members, the proletarian class, without such social station and pecuniary means",²⁴ has been necessarily compelled to seek in secret or non-secret associations. Once the success of such actions became apparent, the organization of parties gained impetus among the bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie, too. (Thus we have revealed one of the causes of the evolution of the present-day system of political parties.)

It is clear from the above facts that the emergence of the multi-party system is a comparatively recent phenomenon in bourgeois democracy. The process makes manifest the shifts in the relations of forces under capitalism. It reveals the fact that the ruling class ceased to be able to sustain its oligarchic power. Its existence has been integrated among the organic constituents of democratic government. As Lenin writes: "In a free country, the people are ruled only by those who have been elected for that purpose by the people themselves. At the elections the people divide themselves into parties, and as a rule each class of the population forms its own party; for instance, the landowners, the capitalists, the peasants and the workers all form separate parties. In free countries, therefore, the people are ruled through an open struggle between parties and by free agreement between these parties."²⁵

As a matter of fact, under bourgeois democracy the multi-party system is a positive phenomenon. The multi-party system may enable the workers to enhance their consciousness, experience and activity by granting the working masses the following opportunities: they may organize their own political associations, which in turn may propagate political and governmental alternatives in variance to those of the ruling exploiting classes, in fact, they are allowed to struggle for their own objectives within the framework of the existing system. It must not be forgotten however that in all periods it is the government and the *raison d'état* which determine the means, that the parties in general, and the parties of the workers in particular, may resort to. It is determined by them what partial objectives may be attained without provoking repression or even a ban. Therefore, G. H. Shachnazarov is right when he writes that

²⁴ K. Marx and F. Engels: *Selected Works*. Vol. I, p. 389.

²⁵ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 25, pp. 227—228.

it would be a mistake to underestimate the democratic content of the multi-party system. The mere fact of the competition of the parties for governmental power enables the general public to close ranks in a determined way behind progressive slogans. The multi-party system, especially if it has struck deep roots in the political life of a country, may curb the following anti-democratic tendencies: the usurpation of the functions of parliament by the government, the spreading of corruption among public officers, and interpenetration between the state machinery and big business, etc. Since under capitalism the one-party system means the open dictatorship of the monopolies, we agree with those bourgeois theorists who are worried because of the recent decline of the traditional multi-party system.²⁶

As we have already mentioned, political pluralism and the multi-party system are not synchronous historically. Pluralism, manifested also in the rivalry of political parties, practically appeared in the latest century. However, political pluralism, without the party system, appeared in an earlier stage of the evolution of bourgeois democracy. Instances of it are as follows: factionalism within the ruling class; contention between big business and the landed aristocracy; the wage disputes between Capital and Labour, etc.

Political pluralism under bourgeois democracy is so independent of the multi-party system that it remains in existence even if the multi-party system practically ceases to exist. Thus, today in some of the bourgeois countries, there is a multi-party system, yet the difference among the parties has diminished, their rivalry does not really involve a conflict of essential interests. For manipulative purposes the parties maintain the appearance of a multi-party system yet, in effect, their operation constitutes a one-party system. This tendency has been increasingly dominant. Some of the experts on bourgeois life speak of it without illusions. As, e.g. George Kennan writes: "In the doctrinal sense, we in America also have in certain respects a one-party system: for the two parties are ideologically undistinguishable, their pronouncements form one integral body of banality and platitude. Whoever does not care to work within their common framework is...condemned."²⁷

A similar view was expressed by Harold Laski in 1938: "since 1689,

²⁶ G. H. Shachnazarov: Op. cit. p. 28.

²⁷ R. Aron ed.: *World Technology and Human Destiny*. University of Michigan Press, 1963, p. 123.

we have had, for all effective purposes, a single party in control of the State. It has been divided, no doubt, into two wings. It has differed within itself upon matters... (yet—A. K.) it has never seriously differed upon the fundamental principles of change.”²⁸ The “two wings” apparently imply the Conservative and the Liberal Parties. In a more recent article, entitled: “Parliament and the Establishment”, Christopher Hollis writes of the lack of difference between the Labour Party and the Conservative Party. “There is no great difference in policy between the parties. There is not even, as Mr. Mackenzie has shown, any great difference in organization. The only difference is a difference of manner.” Elsewhere in his article, he makes his point even more unequivocal: “any British Government, Conservative or Socialist, has over the greater part of the field to pursue very much the same policy as its rival.”²⁹

Ch. Hollis also reveals the reason why is the appearance of a multi-party system maintained under these conditions. He espouses the view that “the executive is indeed much more secure against interference with its omnipotence under such a two-party system with a bogus legislature that it would be under a one-party system with a public opinion that noticed the threat to its liberties in the overt abolition of the traditional legislature”.³⁰

Since the multi-party system is not only manifestation of the “pluralism” of capitalist democracy, this democracy may be “pluralistic” even under a “deteriorated”, formal or a non-existent multi-party system.

Another proof of the difference between the multi-party system and political pluralism is that there have been instances of the multi-party system where the principle of “pluralistic democracy” cannot prevail. Such are the military juntas where the operation of parties is allowed, furthermore, the forms of government in a state of emergency, introduced because of a war or other causes, and a fascist dictatorship with a number of legal parties.

Therefore, political pluralism must not be identified with the multi-party system. The one does not involve the other, both have their own relatively independent cause, evolution and form of expression, etc.

²⁸ H. Laski: *Parliamentary Government*. London, 1938, pp. 93—94.

²⁹ H. Thomas ed.: *The Establishment*. The New English Library, London, 1962, pp. 166—167, p. 169.

³⁰ *Ibid.* p. 173.

Finally, political pluralism, which is the specific manifestation of various interests under the bourgeois democracy of capitalism, must not be identified with the form of manifestation of diverse interests in general. Political pluralism is a specific capitalist form of the manifestation of interests. Under the anti-democratic bourgeois *régimes* these interests are manifested and asserted again in different ways. In the socialist society the activity for the assertion of interests is fundamentally different from all the above-mentioned ones in its direction, methods and whole pattern.³¹ Therefore, political pluralism is not the only way of the manifestation of interests, neither is it true that the diverse groups cannot assert their interests in the absence of pluralism.

Those who carry out a subversive policy, often attempt to smuggle pluralism—which they describe as “the only true” form of interest representation—into socialism with the pretext of broadening socialist democratism. Suggesting that pluralism means the existence of several parties, they strive to restore the bourgeois multi-party system and, thereby, to undermine the leading role of the Communist Party.

In their struggle to expose and neutralize these political manoeuvres, the conscious forces of socialism can wield as theoretical weapons the adequate evaluation of political pluralism, and the demarcation of pluralism from the multi-party system.

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As early as 1797, J. Madison observed sagaciously That: “The most common and durable source of factions (and parties—A. K.) has been the various and unequal distribution of property. Those who hold and those who are without property have ever formed distinct interests in society. Those who are creditors, and those who are debtors, fall under a like discrimination. A landed interest, a manufacturing interest, a mercantile interest, a moneyed interest, with many lesser interests, grow up of necessity in civilized nations, and divide them into different classes, actuated by different sentiments and views.”³²

Naturally, the bourgeoisie and its leading representatives have always paid special attention to have these interests asserted without ever endangering their rule. They have been anxious to keep the conflicting interests under control. Their most important concern has been how to

³¹ Cf. A. Kiss: *Az “új osztály”—fantázia vagy valóság?* (The “New Class”—Phantasy or Reality?), Budapest, 1971.

³² *The Federalist Papers*. p. 79.

regulate and especially how to restrain the working majority, which represents the largest single interest group and which has posed an increasing danger to the bourgeoisie. As John Adams wrote in one of his letters to John Taylor: "If you give more than a share in the sovereignty to the democrats,³³ that is, if you give them the command or preponderance in the...legislature, they will vote all property out of the hands of you aristocrats."

George Washington, Governor Morris, John Rickenson and James Madison are all concerned over the growth of the class of urban people, who are "without property and principles". They feared that the growth of that class would seriously endanger the whole society. As James Madison writes: "In future times, a great majority of the people will not only be without landed but any other sort of property. These will either combine, under the influence of their common situation—in which case the rights of property and the public liberty will not be secure in their hands—or, what is more probable, they will become the tools of opulence and ambition."³⁴

What has been the strategy of the bourgeois for keeping that great majority under control? One of the methods has been—especially in the past—the drive to keep the workers outside politics. The bourgeoisie has been active to make the workers indifferent to the political and social issues, and to persuade them to let the rich, the propertied to administer the public affairs. "Jeremy Belknap, a New England clergyman,...wrote to his friend: 'Let it stand as principle that government originates from the people; but let the people be taught...that they are not able to govern themselves.'"³⁵ Alexander Hamilton, who is—like James Madison—a classic of American political thought, held that the people was a "great beast", and that "Take mankind in general, they are vicious." Therefore, in his address to the Constitutional Convention he argued that: "All communities divide themselves into the few and the many. The first are the rich and well-born, the other the mass of the people. The voice of the people has been said to be the voice of God; and, however, generally this maxim has been quoted and believed, it is not true in fact. The people are turbulent and changing; they seldom judge or

³³ In the early 1800s—as we have already mentioned it—"democracy" referred to the plebeian elements.

³⁴ Quoted in: R. Hofstadter: *Op. cit.* pp. 13—14.

³⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 6—7.

determine right. Give, therefore, to the first class a distinct, permanent share in the government. They will check the unsteadiness of the second, and, as they cannot receive any advantage by a change, they therefore will ever maintain good government... Nothing but a permanent (i.e., governing—A. K.) body can check the imprudence of democracy (i.e., the mass of plebeians—A. K.).”³⁶

This political consideration—strange as it may seem—has not become obsolete. We are witnessing bourgeois endeavours to make the wide masses apolitical. It strives to turn their attention solely to their private lives, sex, the sports, alcohol, narcotics and leisure, and convince them that politics is the business of only the professional statesmen.

Since the “wise” advice has gone unheeded, the working masses have realized their interests, increased their activity and entered the political arena in ever bigger strength, the bourgeoisie is now resorting to the following tactic: it is striving to make the role the people play in the democratic procedures as indirect as it is possible. Therefore, the bourgeoisie has been doing its utmost against the direct exercise of power by the masses, the direct democratic government. As J. Madison wrote in 1797: “When a majority is included in a faction, the form of popular government... enables it to sacrifice to its ruling passion or interest both the public good and the rights of other citizens. To secure the public good and private rights against the danger of such a faction, and at the same time to preserve the spirit and the form of popular government, is then the great object to which our inquiries are directed... A pure democracy, by which I mean a society consisting of a small number of citizens, who assemble and administer the government in person, can admit of no cure for the mischiefs of faction... Such democracies have ever been spectacles of turbulence and contention; have ever been found incompatible with personal security or the right of property...” What “better” solution can the author suggest? A republic, instead of a democracy, by which he means “a government in which the scheme of representation takes place”. Madison holds the view that this is the much sought-for solution which can be used against democracy, i.e., the alleged “evils” of the rule of the masses. The principle of representation means “the delegation of the government... to a small number of citizens elected by the rest”. The effect of it... “is... to refine and enlarge the public views, by passing them through the medium of a chosen body

³⁶ Quoted in: S. K. Padover: *Op. cit.* pp. 12—13.

of citizens, whose wisdom may best discern the true interest of their country, and whose patriotism and love of justice will be least likely to sacrifice it to temporary or partial considerations. Under such regulation, it may well happen that the public voice, pronounced by the representatives of the people, will be more consonant to the public good than if pronounced by the people themselves, convened for the purpose.”³⁷

Madison’s train of thought sheds a new light on the representative system under capitalism. This institute is the expression of the fact that the members of the ruling class have grown in number and their pursuits have become diversified to such an extent that they are unable to “assemble and administer government in person”. Thus they have to delegate the right of decision over general, and especially political questions of bourgeois power to representatives.

Furthermore, in quite a few capitalist countries, the representative system is a forum of people’s sovereignty which the bourgeois-democratic system has been compelled to set up after the bourgeoisie granted political liberty to broad segments of the population and pronounced people’s sovereignty. On the one hand, the representative system pretends to enable the local or national assemblies of people’s delegates to govern in the name of the whole people or, at least, supervise the government. On the other hand, it pretends to be a forum where the voice of the people is given attentive ears, and which is empowered to make judgement over contentious issues. The representative system is suggested to be a forum where the people may express its views and manifest its interests. As J. S. Mill puts it: “Instead of the function of governing, for which it is radically unfit, the proper office of a representative assembly is to watch and control the government: to throw the light of publicity on its acts. . . . In addition to this, the Parliament has an office, not inferior even to this in importance; to be at once the nation’s Committee of Grievances, and its Congress of Opinions; an arena in which not only the general opinion of the nation, but that of every section of it, and as far as possible of every eminent individual whom it contains, can produce itself in full light and challenge discussion; where every person in the country may count upon finding somebody who speaks his mind, as well or better than he could speak it himself. . . . Where those whose opinion is overruled, feel

³⁷ *The Federalist Papers*. pp. 80—82.

satisfied that it is heard, and set aside not by a mere act of will, but for what are thought superior reasons.”³⁸

J. Madison (and after him, several other bourgeois politicians, in fact, the whole bourgeois-democratic practice) wish to confer an additional function on the representative system: the circuitous political route in Parliament is meant to divert the people’s activity; the Parliament should serve as a device to lessen or even consume the energy of the masses.

Even in this form the representative system is a potential menace to bourgeois rule, therefore it has been stripped of executive power. Thus, in every bourgeois state, the legislative power and the executive power are separated, in fact, the power of the executive has been strengthened to the detriment of the legislature. There have been constant efforts to enhance the strength, sway and authority of the government. This is one of the chief irreversible tendencies of the bourgeois-democratic evolution.

Several measures have been brought to prevent Parliament considered as an organ of peoples’ sovereignty or other institutes of representation, from gaining advantage from the high esteem in which they are held by the people, from “abusing” or exceeding their power or attempting to overrule the executive in national issues. Therefore, the advocates of these “rebellious” ideas are either confined to a negligible minority, or excluded from Parliament all together. Since these “dangerous” ideas originate, in the first place, from representatives of the working masses—who strive to use politics to curb capitalist power—efforts are made to dissuade the electorate to vote for them. It is also attempted to reduce the number or proportion of these representatives by reducing the number of the electorate likely to vote for them. Thus the various restrictive bourgeois electoral qualifications were and are of importance. They include the principle of disproportionate representation, the arbitrary demarcation of constituencies, etc.

Offering grounds for these restrictions, J. Madison wrote that: “An increase of population will of necessity increase the proportion of those who will labor under all the hardships of life, and secretly sigh for a more equal distribution of its blessings. These may in time outnumber those

³⁸ *Great Books of the Western World*. No. 43. American State Papers, The Federalist, J. S. Mill. William Benton, publisher, Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc. The University of Chicago, 1952, p. 361.

who are placed above the feelings of indigence. According to the equal laws of suffrage, the power will slide into the hands of the former.”³⁹

Back in 1860, in an article urging the reform of the election system, John Stuart Mill, leading political theoretician on liberalism, wrote of the motivation of the bourgeoisie for heavily delaying the extension of suffrage and introducing it with extreme gradualness. In a democracy with a proportionate system of election—Mill wrote—“absolute power . . . would rest with the numerical majority; and this would be composed exclusively of a single class . . . a class, to say no more, not the most highly cultivated.” Further on the author adds: “Democracy is not the ideally best form of government unless this weak side of it can be strengthened; unless it can be so organised that no class, not even the most numerous, shall be able to reduce all but itself to political insignificance, and direct the course of legislation and administration by its exclusive class interests.”⁴⁰

J. S. Mill sought the ways and means for preventing the masses of people from gaining advantage from the opportunities of democracy. He writes: “These two twofold requisites are fulfilled by the expedient of a limitation of the suffrage, involving the compulsory exclusion of any portion of the citizens from a voice in the representation.”⁴¹ Yet he continues his argument this way: “I regard it as wholly inadmissible that any person should participate in the suffrage without being able to read, write, and . . . perform the common operations of arithmetic . . . If this were really the case, people would no more think of giving the suffrage to a man who could not read, than of giving it to a child who could not speak.” But J. S. Mill calls for additional restrictions: “It would be eminently desirable that other things besides reading, writing and arithmetic could be made necessary to the suffrage.” He concedes that it is difficult to define and check this knowledge and that, therefore, the restrictions on a cultural basis should not be extended. He points out that: “It is also important, that the assembly which votes the taxes, either general or local, should be elected exclusively by those who pay something towards the taxes imposed. Those who pay no taxes, disposing by their votes of other people’s money, have every motive to be lavish and none to economize,” writes Mill, offering grounds for restricting

³⁹ Quoted in: H. Aptheker: op. cit. p. 33.

⁴⁰ *Great Books of the Western World*. No. 43, pp. 380—381.

⁴¹ *Ibid.* p. 381.

suffrage on the basis of property. The dependents on charity should also be excluded from the suffrage, Mill argues. "He who cannot by his labour suffice for his own support has no claim to the privilege of helping himself to the money of others. By becoming dependent on the remaining members of the community for actual subsistence, he abdicates his claim to equal rights with them in other respects. . . . To be an uncertified bankrupt, or to have taken the benefit of the Insolvent Act, should disqualify for the franchise," at least, temporarily, writes Mill.

The author is ever more unequivocal on the need for these restrictive qualifications. "In this state of things, the great majority of voters, in most countries. . . . would be manual labourers; and the twofold danger, that of too low a standard of political intelligence, and that of class legislation, would still exist in a very perilous degree." How to avoid that? Mill proposes the introduction of a disproportionate franchise: more than one vote should be allowed to those who have a better faculty for administering public affairs. One's profession is the foremost indicator of that ability. J. S. Mill shows the bourgeois character of his conception when he writes that: "An employer of labour is on the average more intelligent than a labourer. . . . A banker, merchant, or manufacturer is likely to be more intelligent than a tradesman, because he has larger and more complicated interests to manage. . . . Subject to some such conditions, two or more votes might be allowed to every person who exercises any of these superior functions."⁴² Mill's remark that the liberal professions, the graduates of universities should also be allowed more votes is nothing but an attempt to improve the complexion of the proposed class-oriented regulation.⁴³

J. S. Mill stresses several times that: "The distinction in favour of education. . . . is recommended by its preserving the educated from the class legislation of the uneducated." In Mill's view, "some mode of

⁴² The English Reform Bill of 1867 included this proposal. The owner of each household, who paid a direct tax of over twenty shillings, would have been given a second vote. This proposition of the minority government was defeated in Parliament. In Hungary, in the first decade of our century, Count Gyula Andrassy Jr., Minister of the Interior, intended to introduce an identical bill.

⁴³ This proposal of Mill had been put into practice in England. Until 1928, the college and university graduates were entitled to cast more than one vote. Under the Reform Bill of 1918, no one had vote in more than two constituencies. (Cf.: Courtenay Ilbert, : *Parliament. Its History, Constitution and Practice*. Williams and Norgate Ltd., 1972, p. 60.

plural voting (is—A. K.) sufficient as a counterpoise to the numerical weight of the least educated class.” He is definitely against a “completely universal suffrage”, while asserts that the restrictive qualifications and “a grouping of the constituencies” may be safeguards “as to prevent the labouring class from becoming preponderant in Parliament.”⁴⁴

These ideas are far from being the aristocratic tenets of the last century only. They are typical of the bourgeois approach in general, and come up every now and then. Let us illustrate our statement with the words of Julien Benda, an outstanding theorist of bourgeois democracy, who wrote this after World War II, despite the experience of the struggle against Fascism. He wrote: “on peut voir un abus du principe égalitaire dans le suffrage universel, en tant qu’il accorde la même puissance de vote à un faible d’esprit et à un grand penseur, à un frôleur du bain et à un archétype de moralité, alors que la démocratie veut qu’à tous les citoyens on donne une part dans le gouvernement, de la cité, mais non peut-être une part égale...”⁴⁵

If these regulations are ineffective, the ruling bourgeois class attempts to manipulate the elections with the most diverse methods. If it deems it necessary, its executive institutions and parties even disrupt the normal election procedure and cheat with the returns.

Thus, despite the numerical preponderance of the masses of people, the bourgeoisie can achieve a “legal” majority in the various institutions of representation, which votes for policies running contrary to the interests of the workers, and which provides these policies with the trappings of “legality” and “constitutionality”.

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“If political power is in the hands of a class whose interests diverge from those of the majority, any form of majority rule is bound to become deception or suppression of the majority. Every bourgeois republic provides hundreds and thousands of examples of this kind,” wrote Lenin in 1917.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ *Great Books of the Western World*. No. 43, pp. 382—386.

⁴⁵ J. Benda: *La grande épreuve des démocraties*. Essai sur les principes démocratiques. Leur valeur philosophique, Sagittaire, Paris, 1945, pp. 98—99. “We see in universal suffrage an abuse of the principle of equality, since it accords the same vote to a feeble spirit as to a great thinker, and the same to a sinner as to the archetype of morality. Under democracy, each citizen should be able to participate in the government but, perhaps, not to the same extent.”

⁴⁶ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 25, p. 199.

The political deception of the masses by the bourgeoisie and its politicians does not follow from the latter's "malicious intents". It is a necessary condition and objective requirement of the rule by an exploiting minority in a period when, in the course of the political evolution of capitalist society, the masses "woke up from their historical sleep", became active, and their approach to the other political and social phenomena is more conscious than in the past. Under such conditions the workers can be held back by the bourgeoisie only with a constant and all-out pressure, promises, proposed and (in part) implemented reforms, demagogy, and subtle manipulation. Only thus the bourgeoisie can hope to silence the discontent of the workers, to keep them within the confines of the bourgeois system, and to neutralize or, at least, minimize their struggle against the capitalist system. This governmental "wisdom" have been given an eloquent explication by Walter Bagehot, who is considered to be a classic of British political thought: "In all cases it must be remembered that a political combination of the lower classes, as such and for their own objects, is an evil of the first magnitude; that a permanent combination of them would make them (now that so many of them have the suffrage) supreme in the country. . . . So long as they are not taught to act together, there is a chance of this being averted, and it can only be averted by the greatest wisdom and the greatest foresight in the higher classes. They must avoid not only every evil, but every appearance of evil; while they have still the power they must remove, not only every actual grievance, but, where it is possible, every seeming grievance too; they must willingly concede every claim which they can safely concede, in order that they may not have to concede unwillingly some claim which would impair the safety of the country."⁴⁷

What happens if the workers do not follow the siren song of the bourgeoisie and its politicians, and do not allow the public affairs to be managed solely by their "natural superiors"? What happens if they attempt to have a say in politics not only indirectly, in the form of the elections? What happens if they are not satisfied with the existing forms of representation, and they do not let themselves be deceived by the capitalist promises? What happens if they do not allow themselves to be enslaved by bourgeois demagogy and manipulation? In that case bourgeois democracy shows its other face: coercion, open violence, and terror. As Lenin wrote: "Take the fundamental laws of modern states,

⁴⁷ W. Bagehot: *The British Constitution*. London, 1949. p. 272.

take their administration, take freedom of assembly, freedom of the press, or 'equality of all citizens before the law', and you will see at every turn evidence of the hypocrisy of bourgeois democracy with which every honest and class-conscious worker is familiar," wrote Lenin back in 1919. "There is not a single state, however democratic, which has no loopholes or reservations in its constitution guaranteeing the bourgeoisie the possibility of dispatching troops against the workers, or proclaiming martial law, and so forth, in case of a 'violation of public order', and actually in case the exploited class 'violates' its position of slavery and tries to behave in a non-slavish manner."⁴⁸ Thus, to use the vivid description of Lenin, bourgeois democracy is ever in a state of "limited civil war" against the progressive individuals and movements. It escalates into an open class-warfare the moment the bourgeoisie and its henchmen suspect a danger to the system and, even more so if the system is really endangered.

Thus, in its relation to the workers, bourgeois democracy pursues a two-faceted policy: *on the one hand*, it offers the "carrot" of reforms, and "persuasion" with which it can broaden the popular basis of its rule or can, at least, split and paralyse the opposition. *On the other hand*, bourgeois-democratic government has such organic constituent parts: political restrictions, exclusion from governmental affairs and—if necessary—the policy of open violence, that are aiming at either suppressing the opponents or, if the use of force is ineffective, at least, to rob the opposition of its allies and frighten the least conscious segments of workers. Lenin gave the following characterization of this dual policy: "In every country the bourgeoisie inevitably devises two systems of rules, two methods of fighting for its interests and of maintaining its domination, and these methods at times succeed each other and at times are intervoven in various combinations. The first of these is the method of force, the method, which rejects all concessions to the labour movement, the method of supporting all the old and obsolete institutions, the method of irreconcilably rejecting reforms. Such is the nature of the conservative policy which in Western Europe is becoming... more and more one of the varieties of bourgeois policy in general. The second is the method of 'liberalism', of steps towards the development of political rights, towards reforms, concessions, and so forth. The bourgeoisie passes from one method to the other not because of the malicious intent of individuals,

⁴⁸ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 28, p. 243.

and accidentally, but owing to the fundamentally contradictory nature of its own position. Normal capitalist society cannot develop successfully without a firmly established representative system and without certain political rights for the population... In consequence, vacillations in the tactics of the bourgeoisie, transitions from the system of force to the system of apparent concessions have been characteristic of the history of all European countries during the last half-century, the various countries developing primarily the application of the one method or the other at definite periods."⁴⁹

Though Lenin wrote these words in 1910, the controversial position of the bourgeoisie, which results in alternating use and combination of the two methods, has survived to our days. Therefore, we can witness both the combined use of these policies and methods of exercising power, and the domination of this or the other.

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Imperialism represents a distinctive new phase in the bourgeois-democratic evolution. Lenin wrote the following about the impact of imperialism on democracy: "Imperialism is highly developed capitalism... imperialism is the negation of democracy."⁵⁰ Elsewhere, confronting imperialism with the form of rule in the preceding period, he writes: "Democracy corresponds to free competition. Political reaction corresponds to monopoly..." Imperialism tends to violate democracy, it *strives* for reaction, continues Lenin. He makes it clear: "In this sense imperialism is indisputably the 'negation' of *democracy in general*, of *all democracy*."⁵¹

In a debate with some leading Polish Social Democrats, Lenin pointed out that imperialism does not automatically, and on the basis of its self-legitimacy *of necessity* exclude democracy, therefore, it is worth struggling for democracy and its broadening, even under imperialism. Undoubtedly, however, the considerable limitation or exclusion of democracy is a fundamental tendency of imperialism. Thus, Lenin stressed that: "the specific political features of imperialism are reaction everywhere." He offers a more detailed explication of the issue when he analyses the political characteristics of monopoly capitalism: "Imperialism is the epoch of finance capital and of monopolies, which introduce

⁴⁹ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 16, pp. 350—351.

⁵⁰ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 23, p. 24.

⁵¹ *Ibid.* p. 43.

everywhere the striving for domination, not for freedom. Whatever the political system, the result of these tendencies is everywhere reaction and an extreme intensification of antagonism in this field."⁵²

What changes does this fundamental tendency of imperialism result in, as regards the structure and operation of the bourgeois state power? Lenin calls attention to three chief processes. *First*, the establishment of parliamentarism, which means an increasingly formal system of representation. *Second*, the diversification of the political process: the petty-bourgeois and bourgeois parties wage a spectacular struggle for state positions; and, with its pseudo-contentions, the "political show" diverts the attention of the already activated labouring classes from actual struggling against capitalism. *Third*, the increasingly dynamic development of bourgeois executive power. It is strengthened and its authority is broadened. At the same time, more and more restrictions and coercive measures are brought against the workers. In his *The State and Revolution* Lenin sums up these tendencies the following way: at the end of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century, in the most advanced countries, "the same process went on" as that in the three years after the French Revolution of 1848, "only more slowly, and in a more varied form, in a much wider field: on the one hand, a struggle for power among the various bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties which distributed and redistributed the 'spoils' of office, with the foundation of bourgeois society unchanged; and, lastly, the perfection and consolidation of the 'executive power', of its bureaucratic and military apparatus..." Lenin paid special attention to the latter process, of which he wrote: "Imperialism... has clearly shown an extraordinary strengthening of the 'state machine' and an unprecedented growth in its bureaucratic and military apparatus in connection with the intensification of repressive measures against the proletariat both in the monarchical and in the freest, republican countries."⁵³

Lenin's analyses of the transformation of bourgeois democracy in the epoch of imperialism, written in the first quarter of this century, brilliantly revealed the tendencies which prevail in the bourgeois-democratic systems even today. More and more moderate bourgeois political scientists are realizing that the parliamentary system of representation has become hollow and formal; that the political process is ever more

⁵² V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 22, p. 287 and p. 297.

⁵³ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 25. p. 410.

empty, and is being turned into an instrument of manipulation; that the authority of the executive power has expanded to such an extent that it now penetrates every sphere of social life; that the state machinery becomes ever more independent of the legislative organs; and that the citizen has a dwindling say in the operation of the institutions above him. Ideologists, who are unlikely to know Leninism or plagiarize his thoughts, are calling the attention to the following problems. (Interestingly, their ideas coincide with Lenin's in several places.) "The transformation of modern democracy and the various dangers which it has to meet should be discussed in the light of the experiences of the last decades. The increase in power of the executive the dynamic growth of the administrative machinery, the weakening of parliamentary controls because of international organizations and international agreements, the crisis of the party system and its consequences for political decisions and for public opinion, the vanishing of party differences—all these factors have brought about changes in the political structure. In different countries such changes have taken different forms and have varied in intensity."⁵⁴

⁵⁴ H. W. Ehrmann ed.: *Democracy in a Changing Society*. pp. vii—viii. This assessment can be read in a letter of invitation to a symposium in West-Berlin. It was held in 1962 on the occasion that the Otto Suhr Institute was invited to the Free University.

Chapter 6

On the Democratic Exercise of Power in Socialist Society

There is a genuine people's sovereignty in socialist society. On the one hand, all power is vested in the working people. The workers' interests and will prevail, "the welfare of the people is the supreme law". On the other hand, all power is exercised—directly or indirectly—by the working people.

The essential features of the exercise of power in the spirit of socialist democratism follow from the above-described class character of the rule and the way it is asserted:

—unlike the exclusive and illiberal bourgeois democracy, it has a *mass-democratic* character;

—while the indirect forms preponderate under bourgeois rule, socialist democratism is characterized by a *dialectical unity of direct and indirect democracy*;

—while in the exploiting societies the leaders enjoy a superiority, socialist democratism means a *mutual subordination of the leaders and the governed*;

—instead of political pluralism, under socialism *the system of power is organized on the basis of democratic centralism*, and the interests are manifested and asserted in a specific socialist way;—*the Communist Party discharges the function of leadership and of providing examples to follow*, in the democratic exercise of power;—while under bourgeois democracy the bourgeoisie rules by way of a dictatorship, under socialism, there is a specific socialist mode of combating the tendencies which oppose the people's sovereignty; etc.

The essential features of socialist democracy are in a constant development during the evolution of society toward communism, though they prevail from the inception of socialism. On the one hand, the features of socialist democracy relating to and anticipating the social self-government under communism are more and more unfolding in them and by them. On the other hand, it is ever more evident that they are the means

of not only the workers' social liberation, but of their self-realization, too.¹

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In the time of the construction of socialism and communism, the people is constituted by the large mass of workers. After the exploiting classes were eliminated, the term "people" has come to mean the whole of the population.

Until however the ultimate construction of communism, the people consists of classes and social strata of unequal standing. The social groups have identical fundamental interests, yet they differ in their partial interests. As a consequence, certain members of these groups do not embrace all the tenets of the generally-approved programme of building communism. Already during the period of the transition to communism, certain elements of the co-operative peasantry and of the intellectuals (thus, e.g., segments of the co-operative members with a high income or of the intellectuals holding lucrative jobs) might get into such a comfortable situation where they can declare that "things are good as they are, they do not need to be better if they will not be worse," and that "we have reached the Promised Land, we can stop." "Communism has already been achieved," they assert. Owing to their class circumstances, these conclusions cannot be reached by the preponderant majority of the workers. Only when the ultimate construction of communism is completed and the communist principle of "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs" is implemented, will their social situation be radically transformed. Only then can they say of the moment—as Goethe's Faust did—"Ah, stay, thou art so fair." That object will be attained if the working class transforms the whole society and, thereby, it links the fundamental improvement of its own standing with raising each social group. The teaching of K. Marx and F. Engels that the working class represents not only its own historical interests but those of the remaining labouring classes is, in this respect, true of the socialist society as well. Thus, the working class is the leading force of the socialist and communist transformation. Like before, under socialism the working class is ahead of the rest of the classes in strength, the level of organization and of socialist consciousness. Thus—as we have

¹ This work is devoted exclusively to the analysis of the essential forms and content of socialist democracy. The scope of this work does not allow us to discuss other related problems or the topical tasks.

already mentioned—the working class was not only the leading force during the establishment of socialist power, but has remained the leading force under the construction of socialism and communism.

Under socialism, the mass of labourers other than the industrial workers, i.e., the popular majority building communism, may realize their will provided the leading role of the working class is assured. Socialist democracy is therefore a specific rule of the people where the working class is *primus inter pares*, viz., the *hegemon* of people's sovereignty.

What is the meaning of this fact? How is it manifested? What are its consequences? From the viewpoint of social philosophy, the working class is a two-faceted class. On the one hand, it is a social class with features, aspirations and changes that may be observed empirically. In this respect it is like the other classes, whose slogan is "*Carpe diem*". On the other hand, the attainment of communism is in the immanently, organically and directly real class interest of the working class. It cannot meet its own class demands, unless communism is achieved. Consequently, this class is the subjective condition, vehicle and active promoter of social progress. As K. Marx wrote: "in regard to the world which is coming into being, the proletarian... finds himself possessing the same right as the *German king* in regard to the world which has come into being," and he adds that the proletariat is the heart of the emancipation of man.²

The leading role of the working class prevails provided a workers' policy has ascendancy in the society. Owing to the two-faceted character of the working class, this policy has two aspects: first, the concrete needs following from the empirically observable existence of the working class and, second, the unity of the construction of communism. In so far as the leading forces of the working class lay emphasis solely on the first aspect, they are adherents of economism, syndicalism, and of narrow "guild interests". With the demands of the allied classes left dissatisfied, this policy might provoke conflicts which in turn might endanger the social leading role of the working class, and socialist power itself. If emphasis is laid exclusively on the second aspect the demands of the workers cannot be met. As a consequence, considerable segments of the class lose their actual interest in building socialism and communism, which in turn reduces the numerical strength of the vanguard of com-

² K. Marx and F. Engels: *Collected Works*. Vol. 3, p. 187.

munism, weakens the effectiveness of its actions, and jeopardizes the progress toward communism.

The process of finding the harmony between the workers' empirically observable interests and their aspirations focused on the future, is never automatic. Conscious efforts are needed to achieve the optimum proportion. The leading role in this activity has been played by the Communist Party of the working class.

Naturally, the workers's policy appeared in diverse concrete forms throughout the historical phases. The determinative factors have included the given state of the working class, and the opportunities and requirements of progress. There are, however, attributes which have been present in each genuinely revolutionary workers' policy. Without attempting to offer an exhaustive list, we hereby enumerate some of them:

(1) The direct or indirect, but certainly *genuine* assertion of the leading role of the working class in all the fields of social life.

(2) The planned and proportionate increasing of the social means of production, of the economy which enables the workers' living standard to be regularly raised and—in the long run, i.e., under communism—the needs of the individuals of all-round development, fully satisfied.

(3) The development of the property relations with the aim of making the property belonging to the whole of the people preponderant.

(4) The high-level organization of work; the elimination of the traditional and *naturwüchsig* forms of the division of labour, and the liquidation of the antithesis of mental and physical labour by enabling the individual to pass from one profession to another. Until the disappearance of the present forms of the division of labour, the elimination of the differences in social station and prestige following from the hierarchical arrangement of the workers and management, providing it with mere technical character i.e. the democratization of the working conditions.

(5) The assertion of the principle: "To each according to his work." The gradual turning of socially useful work to be the sole source of incomes. The regular raising of the incomes, and the approximation of the highest and lowest incomes by a gradual levelling.

(6) The gradual and constant improvement and an accompanying regular equalization of the living conditions. The expansion of social benefits, the intensification of the production of goods, the promotion of a genuinely human appropriation, and the equalization of the people's opportunities to consumption.

(7) The elimination of the isolation of the various social groups. The replacement of the sense of "Ego" with the sense of belonging to a group; furthermore, the enrichment of the sense of belonging to a social group with the sense of belonging to the whole of society.

(8) The bringing into the highest social esteem of labour, the worker, and the man ardously striving for the construction of communism.

(9) The assurance of the high-level consciousness and organization of the communists to enable them to rally the remaining members of society.

(10) The assurance of the individual the right to participate directly or indirectly in the discussion, decision and management of public affairs, the right of participation in the supervising activity, by way of constantly broadening socialist democracy.

(11) The diffusion among the public at large of the working masses' plebeian outlook, common sense, democratism, sense of justice, modesty, puritanism (which is different from asceticism), love of life, etc.

(12) The assurance of equal opportunities for each for self-realization.

The foregoing list contains requirements which follow from the essence of the working class. At first sight that they are not of equal importance and value they are requirements which seem more or less essential. The reason is that even the class criteria vary in significance. Our list is, however, not arbitrary. The foregoing twelve points include such general requirements which necessarily follow from the dual character of the working class, and which have to be defined historically concretely and precisely by the conscious representatives of socialism. The activity aiming at the assertion of these requirements must be led by the conscious representatives of socialism. *We can see the concrete formulation of mostly these requirements in our Party's policy, in its ostensibly unrelated decisions.*

That our twelve requirements objectively follow from the conditions of the working class may also be proved by the fact that they are voiced by politically uneducated workers as well. Very often—and without any ideological pressure—they raise these ideas in the form of requirements meant for the leading bodies of socialism.

Thus, the leading role of the working class means the complete assertion of a system of values, political principle and political style, outlook and practice which are represented chiefly by the working people and which are the manifestations of communist tendencies.

Naturally, the mode, methods and organizational forms of the realization of these working-class expectations are determined by the concrete historical conditions of the day. Therefore, the temporary emergence of tendencies which seem to contradict some of the above-listed planks does not mean the abandonment of the platform as a whole. Let us serve two examples. Persistent efforts have been made to implement the policy of bringing the people into an equal position. Yet, pecuniary incentives have to be deployed and the principle of distribution according to the work done have to be consistently implemented to have the production raised. This may provisionally stabilize or even increase the inequality of social groups.³ But here is another example. Consistent endeavours have been made to ensure each young man equal opportunity for entering a college or a university. In a given phase of development, the preferential treatment of the children of physical workers does not at all contradict that policy. In fact, it is an inevitable instrument of the attainment of the original long-term goal. Generally speaking, the decisions and the measures have to always adequately meet the concrete requirements of the concrete situation, thereby promoting the cause of the working class, the cause of communism.

Let us now formulate in other words the leading role of the working class, which is manifested in the implementation of a policy which is in harmony with the above-listed requirements. *The interest of the working people is not simply one among the many interests of the classes and social strata of socialist society.* The outlook, needs, viewpoints and opinion of the working people *are not simply one* among the possible approaches and views. The actions of the working class *are not simply one* of the forces which cooperate or conflict under socialism.

In the life of the society, the decisive and almost universally accepted stand is that of the working class and, as a rule, the actions of the working people are the examples to be followed by the remaining social groups.

The proletarian character of socialist democracy is clearer than ever in the period immediately after the revolution, when the working class is the most conscious and active force of the new power.

The other classes and social strata that have an increasing share in the exercise of power in socialist democracy are themselves subject to changes. Once the system is consolidated, and especially after the radical social transformations: industrialization, the reorganization of agri-

³ Cf. a more detailed analysis of the issue in A. Kiss: Op. cit. Chapter 5.

culture, i.e., the laying of the foundations of socialism, ever broader non-proletarian masses are enlisted to the management of public affairs. These changes may result in the massive widening of socialist democracy; the fact that the direct and active participants in socialist democracy are of the most diverse social stations enhances the comprehensiveness of socialist democracy.

In light of the changes in the social background of the power-holders and the broadening of democracy, the primarily *workers' democracy* character of socialist democracy seems to have faded. What is more, the replacement of the gradually disappearing workers' character of socialist democracy by a classless character is ostensibly a healthy process, which is in line with the gradual obliteration of class distinctions.

The view that the class character of democracy is withering away is without any foundation.

First, the class distinctions will not disappear until the ultimate construction of communism. Therefore, these distinctions and their consequences—including the resultant requirements concerning the building of the state—must not be ignored.

Second, there is no classless socialism, consequently, *there is no socialist democracy without class character*. Socialism and communism were and are the principal goals of the working class. All attempts at creating socialism other than workers' socialism—e.g., Christian Socialism, "populist socialism", and so forth—have been made from different class platforms which were against the workers' socialism. Finally these programs have failed in building a society free from exploitation. The same is the situation under socialism. *Socialist democracy is the manifestation and the means of the implementation of the fundamental programme of the working class, which one is based on Marxism-Leninism*. The interests of the remaining classes and social strata are fulfilled on the basis of this platform. That means that the majority of their interests which really are in accordance with the cause of socialism may be realized. *Socialist democracy is based on this platform of class character*. Socialist democracy calls everybody who agrees with this platform to take part in its implementation.

Let us once again repeat that the class character of socialist democracy persists until the completion of the construction of communism. As János Kádár said in this spirit in an address to the plenary meeting of the National Council of the Hungarian Patriotic People's Front in February 1973: "One of the principal points of the Resolution passed

in the November session of the Central Committee called for *the improvement of the conditions of the working people or, to be more exact, of the factory workers engaged in socialist large-scale industry*. The Resolution mentioned in concrete terms the raising of the wages. But it is clear for all who consider the Resolution as *a whole that there is more at issue than a wage raise*. Our desire is to ensure for the working class the position it deserves in every aspect, viz., politically, morally and in pecuniary terms. This is the essence of the Resolution." Then he made a general remark: "What the workers say of the political life, the organization of the production and the administration of social welfare affairs should be taken more seriously. This is binding on each and all." Therefore, it is inadmissible to let such conditions develop under which it is not the working class that is the leading force of socialist democracy.

Firstly, the fading of the leading role of the working class robs the system of working-class requirements of its significance and it means the postponement of this implementation, which, in turn, objectively endangers the consistently socialist character of socialist democracy.

Secondly, if the leading role of the working class declines under socialist democracy and, as a consequence, its line and actions lose their supremacy among the lines and actions of the remaining social groups, and if members of the working class sense that their leading role is but formal,—even if their leadership is declared—their devotion to the system fades and their active approach weakens. Then socialist democracy finds itself faced with the danger of losing its real class basis, the supreme foundation of socialist rule, that class which has been its most consistent supporter and defender.

The loss of the class character of socialist power—in an extreme case—separates the leadership from not only the working class but also the remaining classes and social strata.

If the interests of the working class—the *daimonion* of government—are pushed aside, the leadership loses its orientation, and its political work becomes a shallow adaptation to the requirements of the day. In that case the leaders tend to disregard theory in decision-making, and decisions become the result of the conflict of the pressure groups of the various social strata. As a consequence, the preservation of the given balance of forces becomes the sole concern of the state and party leadership. The leadership strives to recognize and harmonize every major request (even if it is not righteous), and it attempts to reconcile and eclectically "resolve" the contradictions, and to win certain individuals

and social forces with unprincipled concessions or benefits. On the other hand, the leadership resorts to equally unprincipled, gratuitous and arbitrarily rigorous measures, various inadequate administrative steps against people whom it regards to be "hostile" or disloyal. (Often their only "sin" is a sincere but critical approach to socialism.) The leaders are satisfied with making minor improvements of the conditions, and they refrain from any major progressive change or resolute action. This is the policy of "making small cautious steps forward". The government strives to popularize this policy by attempting to lend it a "wise, just and moderate" character. The "result" of such a policy is social stagnation, which spreads distrust in the existing system and blurs the perspectives.

Since the resolutions and corresponding government policies, produced in the afore-said manner, disregard the genuine demands of the workers, the socialist-spirited political activity of the masses diminishes. A mood of defeatism overwhelms ever larger segments of the population. At the same time, a demand for the radical transformation of the given system emerges (which for many would mean a restoration of capitalism). Others attempt to exploit the given conditions for the attainment of their self-interested ends.

These phenomena could be seen in an extreme form during the last years of the party and state leadership under Mátyás Rákosi in Hungary, Antonin Novotny in Czechoslovakia and Wladislaw Gomulka and Edward Gierek in Poland. It will be recalled that the existing political power and socialism itself were then seriously endangered.

The question may evidently come up whether or not the democratic equality of the various social groups and their organizations is violated by the assertion of the leading role of the working class and its organizations. The hegemonic position of the working class might imply a positive answer, but a closer analysis proves the opposite. *In effect*, democratic equality is violated by the actual social conditions, their backwardness by comparison to communism, and not by the given political situation and by the institutionalized leading role of the working class. The inequality of social groups will not be and would not be eliminated by granting equal opportunities to each of them. The only effect would be the freezing of the existing situation, the advantage of some of the social groups living and acting temporarily under more favourable circumstances. No doubt, that would infringe upon democratic equality. To transcend the given situation, the class which is interested in transcend-

ing it should be in a more advantageous position to implement its policy goals. Paradoxical as it may sound, social inequalities cannot be overcome unless the hegemony of the working class i.e. its socio-political role unequal with that of other classes is ensured.

Anyone could ask at this point: what happens to the remaining classes and strata? Will not they be at a disadvantage? Will not their interests be pushed to the background? The answer is again paradoxical: the remaining social groups cannot optimally realize their goals unless the leading role of the working class is assured. In his above-mentioned address János Kádár was also speaking of the interrelation of the interest of the working class and that of the other labouring classes and strata: "It is the working-class party and the working class which have been able to improve the life conditions of the peasantry, intelligentsia and urban petty bourgeoisie, and has assured favourable conditions for the functioning of the Churches. All this follows from the character of power. The working class has displayed generosity over these issues. Therefore, it is justified and necessary for us to further strengthen the leading role of the working class and to improve its material position. We have seen that the essential points in our policy are accepted, our Resolution has won general satisfaction."

Since it is an organic part and indispensable condition of the policy of the working class to optimally meet the demands of the non-proletarian labouring classes and strata, and since the building of communism is in their historical interest, the working class and the remaining social groups have much in common in their goals. Anyone may convince himself of this by a superficial look at the expectations stemming from the situation of the working class. There is not a single one among these expectations which would not be in harmony with those of each social group. Consequently, the interests of none of the social groups are infringed upon by giving top priority to the interests of the working people, of communism, and to the policy and views based upon them. On the contrary, this is the sole real and effective way of optimally fulfilling the demands of each strata and group of the labouring people.

6.1. The Theory and Practice of Mass Democracy

The first and most important basic principle of socialist democracy which has been actually realized is that socialism is a type of government serving the benefit of the people and realized directly or indirectly by

the people. This is excellently expressed by the terse slogans and theses "for the people, in the name of the people, together with the people."

The terse slogan: "for the people" indicates that the socialist exercise of power has always manifested and promoted the interests and will of the people.

The slogan: "in the name of the people, together with the people" indicates that the government and masses are in unity. The slogan: "in the name of the people" also tells us that there are historical phases when government is not effected by the whole of the working mass. In various periods—to differing extent—the tasks unavoidably necessary for realizing the interests of the people are solved by people's representatives in the name of the people.

The slogan: "in the name of the people" informs us of the fact that the direct and democratic administration of public affairs by the people has not always been universal. Thus, direct democracy and indirect, i.e., representative democracy come under the same heading of mass democracy.

The slogan: "together with the people" expresses two essential points: first, the masses must support the socialist government at all times, in every situation and in each field, second, the leadership must never let itself divorced from the masses of people, it must remain one with them. It has to tune in well to the demands of the people, and it has to be able to merge to some extent with the people. Throughout the various phases of socialism, the thesis of "together with the people" was put into practice in diverse forms. There are times, when only a minority is active in governmental work, while the great majority displays sympathy with the leadership but does not actively support it. In the course of progressing toward communism, more and more people are to actively take part in the management of public affairs and to emerge from their passive backing of the government's activity. However diverse the realizations of the thesis: "together with the people" are, this thesis has of necessity always to be as such as the active exercise of power of the majority of workers be realized through it.

The three constituents of the slogan and thesis: "for the people, in the name of the people, and together with the people", form an organic and inseparable unity. If the slogans: "for the people" or "in the name of the people" are proclaimed in themselves, i.e., without the slogan: "together with the people", they may become catchwords to deceive the working masses which cannot be regarded to represent people's

interests. In the course of history, there have been several instances when inveterate reactionaries set up a "people's" party which pursued an anti-people policy. If the advocates of the slogan "together with the people" are not reactionaries but forces genuinely wanting to serve the people's cause, then, however good their intentions are, they cannot succeed unless enjoying the support of the masses.

A party which proclaims the slogan: "together with the people", but falls short of clearly spelling out the goals of its people's policy, can achieve nothing but a shallow popularity. By letting itself led by the masses, it renounces the opportunity of pursuing a principled policy and this inevitably leads to spontaneity. Since the people consists of diverse classes and social strata which have necessarily diverse demands and aspirations, a party which wants to serve the *whole* people, becomes totally unable to act. Therefore, if a certain political force would like to go hand in hand with the *whole* people taking it as undifferentiated, it can wait for that full the end of time. If, however, it is satisfied by advocating the interests of just a part of the people, the question: which is that part, becomes crucial. Since the working masses consist of classes and strata of diverse interests and outlooks, the leadership has to define a platform behind which it can rally that social group which implements the policy targets and, thereby, activates the working masses. Under socialist democracy this platform centres on the slogan: "for the people". This slogan is the guiding principle of the socialist forces when they select their allies. They can muster the support of the broadest, most honest and worthy segments of the working masses by proclaiming the programme of "for the people". In alliance with these masses, they can successfully realize the proclaimed people's programme.

Thus, the principle of mass democracy combines a definite objective, the ways and means of its attainment and its subjective factors. As it is clear from the term itself, under mass democracy the popular initiatives *from below* are emphasized, and direct and indirect democracy are in an *organic unity*. On the basis of the afore-said characteristics, it can be said of mass democracy that it is entirely different from all other forms of democracy in terms of appreciating in qualitatively other form the problems of ruling society and the historical factors.

It is one of the most decisive essential criteria of socialist democracy that broad segments of the working classes and social strata are enlisted in decision-making managing and controlling state and public affairs.

This criterion clearly demarcates socialist democracy from the democracy of any exploiting class.

As we have already pointed out, the bourgeoisie and its politicians do their best to preclude the participation of the masses in politics and the management of public affairs. As Lenin wrote: "Under bourgeois democracy the capitalists, by thousands of tricks—which are the more artful and effective the more 'pure' democracy is developed—drive the people away from administrative work, from freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, etc."⁴ The theorists of bourgeoisie employ the most various "arguments" to lay the "foundations" of this political practice. "The idea of a rational democracy is not that the people themselves govern, but that they have security for good government, J. S. Mill argues."⁵

According to Max Weber, "the principle of the few" has dominated political action, i.e., the manoeuvrability of small ruling groups... Politics has always been "made" by the few.⁶ Max Weber attempts to make the impression that the bourgeois policy of precluding or, at least, restricting the popular participation in the management of public affairs is a universal rule. In his *Staatssoziologie* Max Weber relies on the "psychology of masses"—which was so popular in the early decades of this century—when he deploys further "arguments" in support of his standpoint. He writes that the "mass" as such (irrespective of the social strata that constitute it) is unable to draw up long- or even medium-term plans. Experience has proved that it is at all times under the emotional and irrational influence of the moment... Only sober minds are able to pursue a successful democratic policy. The better the following preconditions are met, the bigger is the success: (1) decision-making by the fewest possible people; (2) the decision-makers and the governed should be fully aware of their responsibility... The unorganized "mass", the democracy of the streets, are entirely irrational from the viewpoint of state politics, writes Max Weber.⁷

Max Weber alleges that what he says of the political role of the masses in capitalist society applies to each social system. His view is shared by

⁴ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 28, p. 247.

⁵ Quoted in: J. A. Christophersen: *Op. cit.* p. 159.

⁶ M. Weber: *Staatssoziologie*, Berlin, 1956, p. 74.

⁷ *Ibid.* p. 96.

other bourgeois political scientists. This extrapolation is, however, unfounded and erroneous, since in capitalist society the masses are, in the first place, under a bourgeois influence. Furthermore, Weber—like many other capitalist ideologists—mistakes a political leadership's initiative, and role of enlightening and imparting vigour, for the whole of the political process. He ignores that there is no government without the support of the governed and that, without that support, the leaders are but generals without an army. Without that support, they cannot exert any major influence on social processes. Any attempt of the leaders to exert an influence on social processes without the support of the masses is foredoomed to failure.

Bourgeois ideologists are not only hostile to the active political actions of the masses, they allege that democracy is an individualistic category. They claim that liberty means the liberty of the individual, and that democracy is the means of self-realization. As we have already mentioned it, the theoretical foundations of this interpretation of democracy were laid down by Alexis de Tocqueville in the last century. This interpretation has been espoused and further developed by many other theorists. For instance, J. St. Mill wrote that the only liberty which deserves this name is our liberty to seek our happiness in our way.⁸ The individualization of democracy has been widespread also in our century. Woodrow Wilson wrote in the beginning of the 20th century that, undoubtedly, the individual is the basis and prime fact of liberty. . . . There is no such thing as collective liberty. Liberty either belongs to the individual, or it does not exist at all.⁹ Siegfried Neuman stresses in his recent writing that: "political decisions in a democracy rest on a personal basis. . . . For this is its alpha and omega: the confidence in the ability of the citizen to choose between good and evil."¹⁰

We could cite further like views without end.

Anyone can identify the political motivations behind the theory and practice of freeing democracy from the active and direct actions of the masses. They reveal the fear of the exploiters of the workers' actions. As H. Aptheker puts it: "the bourgeoisie wants politics to be confined to

⁸ Quoted in: S. K. Padover: *The Meaning of Democracy*, p. 112.

⁹ W. Wilson: *Constitutional Government in the United States*, 1908, quoted in: *Ibid*: p. 119.

¹⁰ H. W. Ehrmann ed.: *Op. cit.* p. 21.

struggles among varied propertied groups, not between the propertied and the propertyless."¹¹

The undoubtedly existing connection between the above thesis and its "complementary" thesis on the "individual character" of democracy is more indirect and, therefore, more difficult to reveal.

True, with regard to its form, the participation of men in the political life is of an individual character. It is the individual who voices his opinion, casts his ballot, or takes part in decision-making in other ways. He takes part in the actions personally, is the member of organizations individually. If *this* were the essence of the thesis on the individual character of democracy and liberty, if *this* were the message of the thesis on the individual and responsible discharge of the citizen's duties, it would be a stereotyped one that no one would challenge. However, when emphasizing the individual character of democracy, the bourgeois ideologists do not mean *this formal aspect*. Instead, they emphasize that the individual is not—as a rule—integrated into close-knit communities, organizations. On the contrary—they argue—the individual is free to bring decisions over two major issues on his own: (1) whether he intends to engage in politics at all; (2) what will be his political attitude like. The thesis suggesting that democracy and its truest exercise are solely the concern of the individual is nothing but the propagation of the above-described individualistic approach to political action.

This conception of democracy throws doubt upon a major question of democracy. Democracy is a form of the exercise of power, i.e., the *resultant* of the interests and average attitudes within a given ruling class. How is the collective power of this class asserted? Through the isolated or through the co-ordinated action of its members? However widespread individualism has been within the ranks of the ruling class, in all the exploiting societies, the ruling class has exercised its power without dissension, with an impressively high organization, collective activity, uniform agreement, in fact, with the conformism of its members.

In a sociological survey in the United States in 1955, Ch. Wright and H. H. Hyman examined the correlation between social station and the affiliation with voluntary associations. Five status groups were set up according to the family income, schooling, living standard, the profession of the head of the family, and house property. Wright and Hyman found that the higher was the status group the heavier was the affiliation with

¹¹ H. Aptheker: *Op. cit.* p. 20.

voluntary associations. That the two sociologists included the trade unions—which rally the lower income brackets: the workers and employees in junior posts—in the category of voluntary associations, enhances the significance of this telling conclusion.

The survey shows that 76 per cent of the under 2,000 dollars income bracket was affiliated with no association, while only 48 per cent of the above 7,500 dollars bracket was outside any association. Members of two or more associations account for a meagre seven per cent of the first group, while the figure is four times higher, i.e., 30 per cent in the latter group.¹² S. M. Lipset calls attention to the close correlation between income, schooling, the affiliation with associations and the voting activity. Surveys carried out in the Federal Republic of Germany, Sweden, the United States, Norway and Finland have shown that voting activity is higher among the male voters, the higher educated, the urban residents, the holders of senior posts and association members. In the Federal Republic of Germany, for instance, 90 per cent of the landowners and of other self-employed did cast their ballot, while the figure was 78 per cent among lower income bracket labourers, and 52 per cent among agricultural labourers.¹³

These facts prove that in exploiting societies the awareness, organization and activity of the ruling class are—as a rule—higher than those of the oppressed masses. The ruling class is better able to resort to collective action to assert its class interests than the latter.

The members of the ruling class submit themselves voluntarily to the interests of the exercise of power. They participate in the democratic exercise of power not as individuals but as members of a collective in a dominant position. As J. K. Galbraith, the reputed American liberal politician and economist puts it: "The successors to the entrepreneurs were uniting themselves ever more closely with the state and rejoicing in the results. They were also, and with enthusiasm, accepting abridgement of their freedom. Part of this is implicit in the subordination of individual personality to the needs of organization... Business orators have spoken much about freedom in the past. But it can be laid down as a rule that those who speak most of liberty are least inclined to use it. The high executive who speaks fulsomely of personal freedom carefully

¹² R. W. O'Brien—C. C. Schrag—W. T. Martin ed.: *Readings in General Sociology*. Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 1964, pp. 28—29.

¹³ S. M. Lipset: *Op. cit.* pp. 187—190.

submits his speeches on the subject for review and elimination of controversial words, phrases and ideas, as befits a good organization man. The general . . . is a man who has always submitted happily to army discipline. The high State Department official, who adverts feelingly to the values of the free world extravagantly, admires the orthodoxy of his own views."¹⁴

These facts make it clear that the widely-propagated bourgeois thesis on "the individual character of democracy" is far from being accepted universally. This doctrine is meant for those who are oppressed by the bourgeoisie and, especially the working masses. This thesis serves bourgeois ends, and is aimed at maintaining bourgeois rule through dividing the workers, through atomizing the "dangerous" masses to individuals.

Individual action can never attain a substantial and durable improvement of the conditions of the workers and the other non-proletarian exploited. Success cannot be reached by them unless taking advantage of the force inherent in mass action. Sometimes simultaneously, sometimes at different times (and this latter is the typical case) in order to improve their conditions, "detachments" of the large mass need to untiringly voice their demands and harass the bourgeoisie, thereby, to weaken and even undermine its positions.

On the one hand, the reduction of democracy to isolated *individual* robs the labouring classes and strata—who are struggling against the exploiters—of the opportunity for mass action and a constant interference in the management of public matters.

On the other hand, the bourgeois doctrine on the "individual character" of democracy favours nobody but the exploiting propertied class. As long as social inequality survives, citizens will vary in their ability to influence the political process. True, broken down to a personal level, the contribution of the working masses consists of individual actions. However, the members of the exploiting propertied class influence political life not as individuals. Their impact on political life is multiplied due to the following circumstances: thanks to the strength of their capital, they have access to the mass media; they cultivate close links with leading political circles and top-level officers in the executive. As a consequence, their decisions and actions by far outweigh those of the huge mass of labouring citizens. Thus, the "individualization of democracy" is meant to disguise this inconspicuous advantage and to implement its benefits in practice.

¹⁴ J. K. Galbraith: *The New Industrial State*. Hamilton, London, 1967.

Marxist theorists have always been opposed to the bourgeois doctrines which ignore the role of the working masses in history. The classics of Marxism were convinced that any radical social transformation involves the participation of broad masses. As Lenin put it: "The more profound the revolution, the greater the number of active workers required to accomplish the replacement of capitalism by a socialist machinery... The task was one that could be accomplished only by drawing on the masses, only by the independent activity of the masses."¹⁵

Addressing the Fourth Conference of Trade Unions in Moscow, Lenin augmented this idea this way: "the working people themselves, by their struggle, by their movement, by their agitation, must learn to solve a new historical problem (the building of the new order—A. K.); and the more difficult, the greater, the more responsible this new historical problem is, the larger must be the number of those enlisted for the purpose of taking an independent part in solving it."¹⁶

It can be ascertained from the above view that the classics of Marxism regarded mobilization of the masses for the construction of a new society as a principal task. Lenin formulated this thought as follows: "Socialism cannot be decreed from above. Its spirit rejects the mechanical bureaucratic approach; living, creative socialism is the product of the masses themselves."¹⁷

Speaking at a meeting of the Presidium of the Petrograd Soviet in January 1918, Lenin declared: "You cannot do anything without rousing the masses to action."¹⁸

What historical role do the masses play in the construction of socialism? The first and undoubtedly one of the most important tasks is the mass support rendered to the forces of socialism. The socialist forces

¹⁵ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 26, p. 364. The programmes and methods of socialist construction in the Soviet Union are spelled out, and the experiences generalized, in Lenin's works and in the documents of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. All the problems to be encountered and reckoned in socialist construction anywhere, and the possible ways of their solution, are given an eloquent discussion in these writings. Therefore, we shall offer ample quotations from them. The works to be referred to are rich in theoretical content and, further, they represent authentic standpoints which are widely accepted in the communist movement. They serve the theoretical basis for every Marxist-Leninist socialist programme. Consequently, these works have not ceased to be factors in present-day politics.

¹⁶ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 27, p. 469.

¹⁷ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 26, p. 288.

¹⁸ Ibid. p. 501.

cannot assert their interests unless they are supported by the masses. Therefore—like before the socialist revolution—the socialist forces have to enter into rivalry with other classes for winning the support of the masses. As Lenin put it: “The proletarian revolution is impossible without the sympathy and support of the overwhelming majority of the working people for their vanguard—the proletariat. But this sympathy and this support are not forthcoming immediately and are not decided by elections. They are *won* in the course of long, arduous and stern class struggle. The class struggle waged by the proletariat *for* the sympathy and support of the working people does not end with the conquest of political power by the proletariat. *After* the conquest of power this struggle *continues*, but in *other* forms.” In Russia, e.g., it took for the proletariat months, even years, after the setting up of its dictatorship to win the sympathy and support of the majority of workers. As Lenin wrote in 1919: “After two years, this struggle has practically, but still not completely, ended in favour of the proletariat.”¹⁹ *That class triumphs in the long run which can win over the majority of the population.* This conclusion is of decisive import for us and it should guide us in all our activity, said Lenin elsewhere.²⁰

The proletariat continues to rely on popular support even after the consolidation of its dictatorship. In fact, popular support gathers increased political significance: the proletariat, the vanguard of the people, cannot rouse the masses to the building of an entirely new society unless the masses are convinced of the necessity of the proletariat's leading role and the righteousness of its goals. No wonder, Lenin repeatedly raised the problem of popular support. For instance, in an article entitled: “The Constituent Assembly Elections and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat,” he writes that the victory of the Bolsheviks in October—November 1917 could have been very short-lived “had the Bolsheviks been unable to win to their side the majority of the *non-proletarian* working masses. . . . That is the main thing.” Lenin emphasizes that it was state power which was a major instrument of winning the non-proletarian masses. As he puts it: “state power in the hands of one class, the proletariat can and must become an instrument for winning to the side of the

¹⁹ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 30. p. 60.

²⁰ *Ibid.* pp. 187—188.

proletariat the non-proletarian masses, an instrument for winning those masses from the bourgeoisie and from the petty-bourgeois parties."²¹

To attain the objectives of socialist construction the working masses have to be actively enlisted in the management of public affairs. Thus, Lenin writes that the victory of the working class can only be lasting "when this new class learns not from books, not from meetings or lectures, but from the practical work of government. Only when it enlists the vast mass of working people for this work, when it elaborates forms which will enable all working people to adapt themselves easily to the work of governing the state and establishing law and order. Only on this condition is the socialist revolution bound to be lasting."²² Speaking on an earlier occasion, in the November 4, 1917 session of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, Lenin said: "the new regime is setting up milestones in the development of new forms of life by issuing laws to meet the aspirations and hopes of the broad masses. The local Soviets, depending on time and place, can amend, enlarge and add to the basic provisions worked out by the government. Creative activity at the grass roots is the basic factor of the new public life."²³ Years later, writing on socialist construction as based on rank and file activity, Lenin added that there had been a period of socialism when it was practically impossible to implement the decrees immediately and in their entirety. They were, however, excellent instruments of propaganda. Instead of words, deeds were employed for the dissemination of new ideas. "Our decree is a call to the people," Lenin went on, "it calls them to practical work. *Decrees are instructions which call for practical work on a mass scale.* That is what is important. Let us assume that decrees do contain much that is useless, much that in practice cannot be put into effect; but they contain material for practical action, and the purpose of a decree is to teach practical steps to the hundreds, thousands, and millions of people who heed the voice of the Soviet government."²⁴

Marxist theorists have always laid it down that *the strength of socialist power depends on the consciousness and active attitude of the masses.* In the opinion of Lenin, the bourgeoisie considers a state to be strong if the full might of the executive machine suffices for driving the masses where the bourgeois leaders will it. But Lenin and his followers conceive that

²¹ Ibid. p. 262.

²² V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 28, p. 420.

²³ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 25, pp. 287—288.

²⁴ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 29, p. 209.

strength in another way. The strength of a state is in the consciousness of the masses. A state is strong provided the masses are informed of all, are able to form an opinion of everything and at all times act consciously.²⁵ State reliance upon the strength and awareness of the masses has assumed vast importance under socialism. The success of socialist construction is largely dependent on it. That is why Marx, Engels and Lenin considered it to be a cardinal issue whether the state can adequately fulfil its tasks: the organization and management of the construction of socialism. As we have stated it before, the masses play an important role here, too. Back in September 1917, i.e., before the Revolution, Lenin wrote that, following the Revolution of 1905, 130,000 landowners ruled over a population of 150 million at the cost of brutality, pauperism and exploitation. Now that it had a membership of 240,000—Lenin wrote—the Bolshevik Party was undoubtedly able to govern the country, since it was enjoying the support of at least one million people, who were devoted to a future socialist state. Lenin added that they had a special method of decoupling the strength of the state machine. It was the enlisting of the workers for the day-to-day administration of public affairs.²⁶ The experiences of socialist construction had shown, Lenin said, that it was an active attitude and devotion at the masses which facilitated success in the Civil War and the repulsion of the Foreign Intervention. It was this support which facilitated the exposure of the conspiracies against the Soviet power, assured the initial achievements in socialist construction, and imparted a working-class character to socialist state organization. Therefore, Lenin spared no effort to warn that: “the transition from capitalism to socialism is a struggle of an extremely difficult kind. But we are prepared to overcome a thousand difficulties, we are prepared to make a thousand attempts; and having made a thousand attempts we shall go on to the next attempt. We are now enlisting all the Soviet organisations in this new creative life, we are getting them to display new energies. We count on overcoming the new difficulties with the help of new strata,” said Lenin, speaking of the tasks in combatting famine.²⁷ Later, in 1919, he returned to this topic in a generalized form: “Every time the Soviet government encounters difficulties in the extremely difficult job of building socialism, it knows only one way to overcome them, and that

²⁵ *Idem.*

²⁶ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 26, pp. 111—112.

²⁷ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 27, p. 433.

is to turn to the workers, to wider and wider sections of the workers every time. I have already said socialism can be built only when ten and a hundred times more people themselves begin to build the state and the new economic life. . . . we must reach down deeper and more boldly enlist new sections. They still lack training, they will inevitably make mistakes, but we are not afraid of that. We know that in this way we shall get young trained workers and recompense errors a hundredfold by securing scores of younger and fresher forces. There is no other source we can draw on. We must move ahead all the time, take our young workers from wherever we can put them in more and more responsible posts.”²⁸ And Lenin employed his experience to arrive at an inference of international validity: “Unbreakable ties with the mass of workers, the ability to agitate unceasingly among them, to participate in every strike, to respond to every demand of the masses—this is the chief thing for a Communist Party.”²⁹

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When Marxist theorists lay it down that history is made by the broad working masses, they do not base this view on mystic teachings, or “the adoration of workers” and the autotelic advocacy of peasant values, which now and then come into vogue among left-wing intellectuals. Their view originates in a thorough analysis of the societal and, especially, the class relationships.

Nobody but the millions of working people can create a new society which is free from exploitation. It is in their daily as well as historical interest to realize this goal.

Marxist theorists and politicians premise the leading role of the working masses in shaping history, yet consider and weigh realistically and without stratagem the character of the remaining labouring classes. That is how they strive to rally the masses to struggle and work. Their efforts cannot be successful unless they conceive a realistic picture of the labouring classes and are able to elaborate adequate methods and effective slogans in order to rouse them to activity.

Therefore, Marxist theorists and politicians avoid rendering a myth of the working masses or the working class, the leading class of the society. Neither do they look at them through pink-coloured glasses or attempt to make idols of them. As Lenin wrote in 1918: “When the worker

²⁸ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 28, p. 403.

²⁹ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 29, p. 563.

became the vanguard leader of the poor he did not thereby become a saint... Having begun the communist revolution, the working class cannot instantly discard the weaknesses and vices inherited from the society of landowners and capitalists."³⁰ Elsewhere he writes: "The workers were never separated by a Great Wall of China from the old society. And they have preserved a good deal of the traditional mentality of capitalist society. The workers are building a new society without themselves having become new people, or cleansed of the filth of the old world; they are still standing up to their knees in that filth. We can only dream of clearing the filth away. It would be utterly utopian to think this could be done all at once. It would be so utopian that in practice it would only postpone socialism to kingdom come... No, that is not the way we intend to build socialism. We are building while still standing on the soil of capitalist society, combating all those weaknesses and shortcomings which also affect the working people and which tend to drag the proletariat down."³¹

The historic mission of the working class: that it is the grave-digger of capitalism, and the leading force of the whole working people, does not in itself make it a "pure socialist force." The builder of a new society as it is, the working class cannot get rid of the survivals of its earlier self overnight. Thanks to its class character, however, it does have the ability to overcome its own weaknesses. Accordingly, emphasizing that the working class is not saintly and cannot instantly discard its weaknesses and vices, Lenin also says that: "the working class can vanquish the old world—and in the end will certainly and inevitably vanquish it—with its vices and weaknesses..."³²

Further, it is its own revolutionary and society-building activity which enable the working class, the masses of workers, to cleanse themselves from the filth of the old world. As Marx and Engels wrote in *The German Ideology*: "the revolution is necessary not only because the *ruling* class cannot be overthrown in any other way, but also because the class *overthrowing* it can only in a revolution succeed in ridding itself of all the muck of ages and become fitter to found society anew."³³

Unlike the opportunists, doctrinaires, sectarians, and quasy mock-revolutionaries, the Marxist theorists and politicians never capitalize on

³⁰ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 27, p. 398.

³¹ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 28, pp. 424—425.

³² V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 27, p. 398.

³³ K. Marx and F. Engels: *Collected Works*. Vol. 5, p. 53.

the *given* state of consciousness, vices and weaknesses of the working masses. They never wield them as weapons to work up passions against the revolutionary and society-shaping activity of the working masses. Should it be made a requirement that the new society must be built by only "pure men" and "true socialists," it would postpone the realization of the task indefinitely.

The conditions of capitalism necessarily distort the character of the working masses in every aspect.

Even if the working class is not free from shortcomings, and during their shaping of history, its members commit mistakes, the vanguard of socialism must be with the working masses.

The activities of the masses are not free from mistakes, yet "the Communists quite rightly regard it as their duty *to be with the fighting masses* of the oppressed..." wrote Lenin in 1919. "Mistakes are inevitable when the masses are fighting, but the Communists *remain with the masses*, see these mistakes, explain them to the masses, try to get them rectified, and strive perseveringly for the victory of class-consciousness over spontaneity. It is better with the fighting masses, who, in the course of the struggle, gradually learn to rectify their mistakes, than with the paltry intellectuals, philistines, and Kautskyites, who hold aloof until 'complete victory' is achieved..."³⁴

Having realized the history-shaping role of the working masses, the socialist vanguard defined the tasks of the attainment of the genuine programme of the people, the building of communist society:

—to educate the broadest masses and rally them for the struggle against exploitation and for the defence of the new order;

—to unleash and harness their limitless energies for communist construction.³⁵

³⁴ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 29, p. 396.

³⁵ Non-Marxist *Realpoliticians* and social scientists who have closer links to the masses and can, therefore, get to know them better, have also realized the great historical role of the masses and the importance of their initiatives and creative capacities. In an interview with the Zagreb *Viesnik* of Yugoslavia, George H. Gallup, founder of and an authority on opinion polls in the United States, declared that, as a rule, the public opinion is ahead of the leaders. During the past twenty-five years, Gallup added, the American general public was ahead of its elected representatives over each major issue. We have proved with the questionnaire method on many occasions that the rank and file make up their mind quicker than their leaders. (Z. Letica: "Questionnaire—A Key Element of American Life," in *Croatian, Viesnik*, March 27 1960.)

Which are the specifics of mass democracy in a body politic? What are the fundamental forms of socialist mass democracy?

Mass democracy means, *in the first place*, and decisively the successful assertion of the interests of the working classes and social strata.

The *second* essential specific of mass democracy is a free scope for the active attitude of the working masses. Describing this condition as part of the programme of action, Lenin wrote: "every representative of the masses, every citizen, must be put in such conditions that he can participate in the discussion of state laws, in the choice of his representatives and in the implementation of state laws."³⁶

The *third* specific of mass democracy follows organically from the first two ones. It is a high-level and conscious participation of the working classes and social strata in each major phase of the management of public matters. Namely, the making, implementation and supervision of the decisions and resolutions.

The workers' initiative and active attitude may become manifest in the following forms:

(1) *The worker is free to express his opinion and to attempt to modify the opinion of others. The masses are free to express their opinions both about public affairs and issues at local and enterprise levels.* The questions raised may cover any sphere of social life, economy, politics and culture. Their opinions are heeded by the whole hierarchy of leaders and institutes of government.

(2) *The information of the masses of each major issue and of questions of public interest.* Emphasis is laid on information about the motivations behind the leaders' most different decisions, and about the implementation and results of the resolutions. As Lenin stressed several times: "we must go openly to the masses, we must tell them what the situation is, tell them the whole truth and open their eyes, because the more this truth is known... the more determinedly, more steadfastly and class-consciously will they come over to our side."³⁷

(3) *The workers' direct and indirect enlisting for decision-making and the management of public affairs.* Workers' representatives may *directly* take part in the management of public affairs and manifest their views in voting at rallies, conferences, meetings of activists, and at congresses.

³⁶ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 27, p. 212.

³⁷ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 29, p. 459.

Indirectly their directly or indirectly expressed views are also heeded, e.g., the results of public opinion polls are keenly followed.

Lenin was convinced of the special importance of the workers' meetings in the decision-making process. The participants of these meetings discuss diverse issues, weigh the importance causes and effects of the proposed alternative solutions, and adopt resolutions. Challenging those who derided the workers' discussions, and various meetings Lenin wrote in early 1918: "The present Soviet institutions and the economic organisations which are characterised by the concept of workers' control in industry—those organisations are still in a period of ferment and instability. In these organisations, naturally, the aspect characterised by discussion and the airing of questions at meetings prevails over the business aspect. It could not be otherwise, for without awakening to activity the broad masses hitherto asleep, there could be no question of any revolutionary change. The endless discussions and endless holding of meetings—about which the bourgeois press talks so much and so acrimoniously—is a necessary transition of the masses still completely unprepared for social construction, a transition from historical somnolence to new historical creativeness."³⁸

Elsewhere he adds: "The 'mania for meetings' is an object of ridicule . . . of the bourgeoisie, the Mensheviks . . . But without the discussions at public meetings the mass of the oppressed could never have changed from the discipline forced upon them by the exploiters to conscious, voluntary discipline."

"The airing of questions at public meetings is the genuine democracy of the working people, their way of unbending their backs, their awakening to a new life, their first steps along the road which they themselves have cleared of vipers (the exploiters, the imperialists, the landowners and capitalists) and which they want to learn to build themselves, in their own way, for themselves, in the principles of their own Soviet, and not alien, not aristocratic, not bourgeois rule."³⁹

In spring 1918 Lenin pointed out that, with the masses having been awakened, the phase of merely airing questions at workers' meetings has to be left behind. Preserving the scope for meetings and broad discussions, the strictest individual responsibility has to be introduced in the execution of assignments. As he put it: "Now has come the turning-

³⁸ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 27, p. 210.

³⁹ *Ibid.* p. 270.

point when—without in any way ceasing to prepare the masses for participation in state and economic administration of all the affairs of society, and without in any way hindering their most detailed discussion of the new tasks (on the contrary, helping them in every way to carry out this discussion so that they independently think out and arrive at correct decisions)—we must at the very same time begin strictly to separate two categories of democratic functions: on the one hand, discussions and the airing of questions at public meetings, and, on the other hand, the establishment of strictest responsibility for executive functions and absolutely businesslike, disciplined, voluntary fulfilment of the assignments and decrees necessary for the economic mechanism to function really like clockwork.”⁴⁰

The discussion of diverse issues at the masses is part and parcel of mass democracy. The forms may vary: factory meetings, conferences, consultation of activists, congresses of workers in diverse economic sectors and sub-sectors, etc.

The participation of the working masses in the management of public affairs involves more than the mass action. The worker may take part in the decision-making mechanism also as an individual. The significance of this was repeatedly stressed by Lenin. Addressing the Extraordinary Seventh Congress of the Russian Communist (Bolshevik) Party, he emphasized: “All citizens must take part in the work of the courts and in the government of the country. It is important for us to draw literally all working people into the government of the state. It is a task of tremendous difficulty. But socialism cannot be implemented by a minority, by the Party. It can be implemented only by tens of millions when they have learned to do it themselves. We regard it as a point in our favour that we are trying to help the masses themselves set about immediately and not to learn to do it from books and lectures... We are perhaps making a bad job of what has to be done, but we are urging the masses to do what they have to.”⁴¹

In his article: *The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government*, Lenin gave credit to the Soviet power for pioneering in the attempt to teach every citizen how to govern, and to have them set about managing public affairs. As he puts it: “Our aim is to draw *the whole of the poor* into the practical work of administration, and all steps that are taken in this

⁴⁰ Ibid. p. 211.

⁴¹ Ibid. p. 135.

direction... should be carefully recorded, studied, systematised, tested by wider experience and embodied in law. Our aim is to ensure that every toiler, having finished his eight hours' 'task' in productive labour, shall perform state duties *without pay*; the transition to this is particularly difficult, but this transition alone can guarantee the final consolidation of socialism."⁴² In 1922, writing of the reorganization of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection, Lenin reiterated that the workers and peasants, in and outside the Party, should be acquainted with administration, and that this assignment should not be neglected either in the theoretical or practical work.⁴³

In socialist mass democracy the personal representation of the common worker cannot and is not confined to the performance unpaid duties solely in *local* organizations. On the contrary. *Lenin held it essential to include in the whole structure of government not only career Party officials and not only members of economic managements who are ex officio participants in the work of the leading organs, but also rank-and-file people who are in close touch with production or other productive work, and participate in administration besides their everyday activity.* Lenin proved his adherence to this tenet on several occasions. For instance, in 1919, he wrote in a draft resolution on the composition of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee (A.C.E.C.)—i.e., the chief executive body of the Soviet government: "Do not include all the People's Commissars, as well as the Chairman of the Central People's Commissariat (i.e., Lenin himself—A. K.). Reduce the number of intellectuals and Soviet officials of the centre... Considerably increase the number of workers and working peasants who are definitely in close touch with the non-Party mass of workers and peasants."⁴⁴ In the wake of this draft resolution, the Eighth Congress of the Russian Communist (Bolshevik) Party adopted a resolution, under which the composition of the A.C.E.C. had to be modified. The major part of the A.C.E.C. membership had to be selected among local officials who had been active among masses of peasants and workers.⁴⁵

Three years later Lenin raised the issue again. Commenting on the

⁴² Ibid. p. 273.

⁴³ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 33, pp. 354 and 481—486.

⁴⁴ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 42, p. 151.

⁴⁵ *Az SZKP kongresszusainak, konferenciáinak és központi bizottsági plénumainak határozatai* (Resolutions of the Congresses, conferences and central committee plenums of the CPSU), Part I, Budapest, 1954, p. 517.

draft resolution on the A.C.E.C., he wrote: "The session of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee has shown how wrongly the A.C.E.C. is constituted. The great majority of its members are officials. I propose that the Politbureau pass a decision: 'To recognize as essential that no less than 60 per cent of the members of the A.C.E.C. should be workers and peasants not occupying any official posts in government bodies; that no less than 67 per cent of the A.C.E.C.'s members should be Communists.'"⁴⁶

It was so important for Lenin to draw in the central leadership rank-and-file people who are engaged in direct productive work or in other productive sectors and not career officials that he applied this principle to the Central Committee as well. In 1921 in an outline of the speech at a meeting denouncing the "platform of ten," he wrote: "take really proletarian elements into the Central Committee."⁴⁷ In the outline of an article on the reorganization of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspectorate, Lenin wrote: "I visualise this reform of the W.P.I. in the following manner: some 50 to 75 workers and peasants, fully tried and trusted as to conscientiousness and devotion, are elected to the Central Committee of the Party in addition to the other C.C. members. At the same time, the staff of the W.P.I. should be reduced at last... to several hundred, consisting, on the one hand, of persons with most experience in W.P.I. work in general, i.e., persons who are most familiar with the general supervision of our apparatus of highly skilled specialists and who have a knowledge of both our apparatus and of the principles and problems of office work organization, methods of verification and investigation—and, on the other hand, of persons of the purely secretarial, auxiliary staff. The task of the new members of the C.C., who have fully equal rights with the other members of the C.C., is, by long hard work, to make a study of and improve our state machinery."⁴⁸

In his letter to the Thirteenth Congress of the Party in December 1922, Lenin proposed to increase the Central Committee membership to dozens or even a hundred. He regarded it important to attain the following aims: to enhance the prestige of the Central Committee; to eliminate or at least lessen the dissension among the factions within the Central Committee. He proposed to select the new members mostly among

⁴⁶ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 42, p. 420.

⁴⁷ Ibid. p. 282.

⁴⁸ Ibid. pp. 435—436.

workers and peasants because, as he put it: "It seems to me that our Party has every right to demand from the working class 50 to 100 Central Committee members, and that it could get them from it without unduly taxing the resources of that class."⁴⁹ The reasons for his proposal were as follows: "The increase in the number of Central Committee members to 50 or even 100 must, in my opinion, serve a double or even a treble purpose: the more members there are in the Central Committee, the more men will be trained in Central Committee work and the less danger there will be of a split due to some indiscretion. The enlistment of many workers to the Central Committee will help the workers to improve our administrative machinery, which is pretty bad. . . . I think that a few dozen workers, being members of the Central Committee, can deal better than anybody else with checking, improving, and remodelling our state apparatus. . . . In my opinion, the workers admitted to the Central Committee should come preferably not from among those who have had long service in Soviet bodies (in this part of my letter the term workers everywhere includes peasants), because those workers have already acquired the very traditions and the very prejudices which it is desirable to combat. The working-class members of the Central Committee must be mainly workers of a lower stratum than those promoted in the last five years to work in Soviet bodies; they must be people closer to being rand-and-file workers and peasants. . . ."⁵⁰

As if foreseeing the cult which was later built around I. V. Stalin, in the very same letter Lenin proposed to curtail the power of Stalin. *At the same time*, in order to avoid the cult of a personality, a split in the Party and, in order to improve socialist governmental activity, he attached cardinal importance to the increased workers' character of the central leadership.

(4) *The working people plays an active role in implementing the resolutions.* There are full-grown institutional forms to ensure the active attitude of the masses. We can mention here the organs which are state and social bodies at the same time: e.g., the workers' militia, the voluntary police and fire brigade, etc. Further, the party organs, and the purely social bodies, as the trade unions, the co-operatives, the youth organizations, and the organizations of diverse strata, etc.

There are additional outlets for the workers' activity: they may par-

⁴⁹ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 36, p. 593.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* pp. 596—597.

ticipate in the administration of public affairs, or may initiate other positive socialist actions, e.g.: may compete in raising their output or may espouse the calls for solidarity with other peoples. In addition to the institutional forms, the masses may be active in *ad hoc* associations, where the worker can strive to attain a given purpose individually or collectively. Lenin attached especial importance to the many-faceted participation of the working masses in realizing the resolutions. His conviction can be illustrated best with his proclamations and addresses written immediately after the Great October Socialist Revolution.

This is what he wrote in the proclamation: "To the Population" in November 1917: "Working people! Remember that now *you yourselves* are at the helm of the state. No one will help you if you yourselves do not unite and take into *your* hands all affairs of state. *Your Soviets* are from now of the organs of state authority, legislative bodies with full powers. . . . Get on with the job yourselves; begin right at the bottom, do not wait for anyone. Establish the strictest revolutionary law and order. . . . Ensure the strictest control over production and accounting of products. . . . Be watchful and guard like the apple of your eye your land, grain, factories, equipment, products, transport—all that from now onwards will be *entirely* your property, public property. Gradually, with the consent and approval of the majority of the peasants, in keeping with their *practical* experience and that of the workers, we shall go forward firmly and unswervingly to the victory of socialism. . . ." ⁵¹

Addressing the Third All-Russia Congress of Soviets, Lenin said: "We know only one way for the proletarian revolution, namely, to occupy the enemy's positions—to learn to rule by experience, from our mistakes. We do not in the least belittle the difficulties in our path. . . . Soviet power does not know everything and cannot handle everything in time, and very often it is confronted with difficult tasks. . . ." On numberless occasions, Lenin said, delegations of workers and peasants asked him what was to be done. This is what he answered to them: "You are the power, do all you want to do, take all you want, we shall support you, but take care of production, see that production is useful. Take up useful work, you will make mistakes, but you will learn." ⁵²

It is an essential duty and an inherent part of the activity of the conscious forces of socialism to encourage, embrace, strengthen, upgrade

⁵¹ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, pp. 297—298.

⁵² *Ibid.* pp. 467—468.

and, thereby, make universal the spontaneous socialist initiative of the working masses.

(5) *It is an unmistakable sign of mass democracy that more and more leading posts, be they low or high, and in every field, are filled by the workers' directly or indirectly elected representatives.*

Marx, Engels and Lenin often stressed this tenet of mass democracy. Heeding their advice, the framers of every major Marxist party document espoused it at the turn of the last century. Engels, for instance, in his "*Critique of the Social-Democratic Draft Programme of 1891*" proposed the inclusion of the following demand: "Complete self-government in the provinces, districts and communes through officials elected by universal suffrage. The abolition of all local and provincial authorities appointed by the state."⁵³ The final text of the Programme (which served as a model for the makers of the programmes of Marxist workers' parties in the beginning of this century) included the following demands. The Social-Democratic Party of Germany demanded a direct popular legislature by granting the people the right of the proposition or rejection of motions. The Party also demanded the people's self-determination and self-government in the entire empire, in the provinces, districts and communes. The authorities should be elected by the people, the Party demanded, and the people should be granted the right to call them to account.⁵⁴

Lenin quoted the relevant ideas of Marx and Engels approvingly. In fact, he had them included in the draft programmes and final programmes of the Russian Communist (Bolshevik) Party.

That this trait of mass democracy has not at all become outdated may be illustrated by the Programme of the Soviet Communist Party, adopted in 1961. The Programme stresses that the Party holds it necessary to take further steps for the assertion of democratic principles in *administration*. Every leading post in the state organs should be gradually rendered elective, and the electorate and the representative organs should be granted the right to call all the leading state officials to account.⁵⁵

Mass democracy involves a direct or indirect popular supervision of the performance and personal political attitude of the whole hierarchy of leaders, whose power originates in the people. Thus, when it comes to

⁵³ K. Marx and F. Engels: *Selected Works*. Vol. 3, p. 437.

⁵⁴ Frederick Engels: *Op. cit.* p. 82.

⁵⁵ *Protocol of the Twenty-second Congress of the CPSU* (in Hungarian), Budapest, 1962. p. 801.

promote, decorate or reward them, the opinion of the central leadership—which is perhaps based only on their evident loyalty—should not outweigh that of the workers.

If the masses are not satisfied with the performance of a leader, they have the right to criticize them or call them to account. They may even recall them or—if the leader's mistakes are grave—institute legal action against them. As we have already mentioned it, Engels regarded the following demand as the first condition of political liberty: "all officials should be responsible for all their official acts to every citizen before the ordinary courts and according to common law."⁵⁶ In a similar vein, some 70 years ago, Lenin included among the demands of the draft programme of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party that: "the right of every citizen" should be ensured "to prosecute any official, without previously complaining to the latter's superiors..."⁵⁷

(6) *The working masses' active participation in every major sphere of social life, primarily in checking the implementation of the resolutions, is an important specific of socialist mass democracy.* On the one hand, this supposes and involves the information of the public of everything that happens, low or high; and that the least possible issues should be treated as confidential or secret. Further, the leaders and the leading organs must regularly report back to the workers about the affairs at local and country-wide level, about the implementation of the resolutions which were passed with the workers' participation, about the problems of management, the leaders' ideas on how these problems can be overcome, and about their short and longer term plans.

The masses' active attitude in supervising the management of public affairs also means that the workers may control the activities in every field of life either directly in person or indirectly, through their representative organs or the other institutions and modes of control.

The most diverse forms of control must be (and are) assured for the masses: from the *ad hoc* checks to the stabilized institutionalized forms of supervision.

It will be recalled that Lenin attached especial significance to the participation of the masses in checking the implementation of resolutions. Accordingly, from the early days of the victory of the Revolution, he

⁵⁶ K. Marx and F. Engels: *Selected Works*. Vol. 3, p. 34.

⁵⁷ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 6, p. 28.

gave priority to the establishment of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspectorate. For instance, in 1919, in his notes on the Draft Decree on the Reorganization of State Control, Lenin suggested the following amendments: "(1) formation of central (and local) bodies with workers' participation; (2) introduction by law of the systematic participation of witnesses from among the workers, with compulsory participation up to two-thirds of women."⁵⁸

Further amending the Draft, he made the following proposals: "all working people, both men and *particularly women*, should serve in the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection... For this draw up lists in the localities... excluding clerks, etc.—all others *in turn* to participate in the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection".

Lenin opined that it was important to enlist the workers in every level of the people's control. As he wrote in late 1919: "Gradually summon peasants from the localities (they must be non-party peasants) to participate in the State Control Commission at the centre; begin with at least (if it is impossible to do more) one or two from each gubernia and then, depending on transport and other conditions, *increase the number*. The same thing for non-party workers."⁵⁹ In his proposal on the reorganization of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection, Lenin suggested to fill the responsible positions in the Central Control Commission with well-tested workers.

Lenin stressed that the socialist leadership has to learn how to enlist in the most effective way people of diverse level of education to the execution of various tasks. He has given the following advice: "Participation has to vary according to the degree of development of the participants—beginning with the role of 'listener', or witness, or learner for the illiterate and completely undeveloped workers and peasants, and ending with the granting of all rights (or almost all) to the literate and developed who have been *tested* in some way or another."⁶⁰ Speaking at a session of the Moscow Soviet, Lenin raised the issue again: "You must recruit the most diffident and undeveloped, the most timid of the workers for the workers' inspection and promote them. Let them progress in this work. When they have seen how the workers' inspection participates in state affairs, let them gradually proceed from the simple

⁵⁸ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 28, p. 486.

⁵⁹ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 30, pp. 300—301.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.* p. 300.

duties they are able to carry out—at first only as onlookers—to more important functions of state.”⁶¹

The workers take part in the controlling activity in large numbers provided they see its purpose. They will not participate in large numbers unless they know that their controlling action is effective, i.e., the mistakes will be rectified, the shortcomings overcome and the quality of work improved. Socialist mass democracy is superior to all other democracies on the strength of the very fact that the findings of the people's control are in effect heeded and followed up by effective measures. Under socialism the worker is granted the right to notify any of several organs (the Party, social organizations, state bodies, the people's control, or the procurator's office) about problems of public interest. Thus, a rank-and-file worker may appeal even to the highest bodies. These bodies are in the position to voice their opinion about any issue, may take the required actions or institute an inquiry into any case, thereby, overcoming the shortcomings.

A careful analysis of Lenin's activity may shed light on the operation of the organization of control from the bottom to the top. The analyst can discover how the Bolshevik-type socialist government responds to the workers' notifications, how it can effect a genuine socialist control and an administration serving the interests of the masses of people, without interfering from above with the day-to-day work of the leaderships of various levels. Numerous examples could be furnished to substantiate this statement, but let us here relate just two characteristic events. In May 1921 Professor A. Yarilov appealed to Lenin for help to get back his and his domestic servant's belongings requisitioned by the authorities in Krasnodar. Then Lenin sent a telegram to the chairman of the local executive committee and called on him to give back the professor and the Bavarian peasant woman in his household all the belongings, clothes and household devices taken away from them on March, 24. If the movables could not be retrieved, he wrote, the family should get a compensation in kind. Lenin made it clear that, in his view, the professor did not belong to the bourgeois class either on the basis of his property or his outlook.⁶² As we can see from this example, Lenin did not confine himself to taking notice of the complaint and sending it to the relevant authorities to take the necessary measures. First, he

⁶¹ Ibid. p. 415.

⁶² (Leninist Reader) Ленинский сборник Vol. 37. Moscow, 1970. p. 296.

gathered information about the political reliability of the allegedly hostile people. Second, he did not only give guidance on how to annul the mistaken decision but saw to avoiding a formal rectification. Since it would have been impossible to get the requisitioned goods for money that time, compensation in kind was the only reasonable solution of the affair.

Lenin attached utmost importance to the cultivation of direct relations with rank-and-file people. It is insufficient, he held, to meet them only in the rallies and other formal events. He strived to establish personal links with many of them also by sharing their personal problems. He believed that this was an effective way of getting to know better the work of the lower-level organs. In December 1922, when he was afflicted by a serious illness, A. I. Rykov proposed to reduce the number of the people whom Lenin received in audience. He proposed to send the people to a preliminary audience with Lenin's deputies or the Central Committee secretaries. Rykov was of the view that only the people with most important problems should be let to Lenin. But in his letter L. B. Kamenev, A. I. Rykov and A. D. Tsurupa, Lenin firmly opposed it: "Owing to a recurrence of my illness I must wind up all political work and take a holiday again...I must say, however, that I utterly disagree with Rykov's practical addendum, and I am more the exact opposite against it—namely, that reception should be quite free, unlimited and even extended."⁶³

The evaluation of the experience of the work done, and the exposure of the shortcomings, if any, are part and parcel of the controlling activity of the working masses. But mention should also be made of the recommendations put forward by the people's controllers for the improvement of work.

It can be inferred therefore that socialist people's control is more than a *post factum* examination of the phenomena. As a matter of fact, it is the principal purpose of the controlling activity to pave the way for recommendations for the most effective improvement of work.

Lenin wrote in this spirit in 1918 in the "*Draft Decision on the Use of State Control*" that: "Tasks of control are of two kinds: the very simple task of checking on warehouses, goods, etc.; the more difficult one of checking on the efficiency of the work; combating sabotage, completely

⁶³ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 42, p. 432.

exposing it; checking on the way the work is being organised; ensuring the greatest *efficiency* of work, and so on.”⁶⁴

In his draft to the article: “*How We Should Reorganise Workers’ and Peasants’ Inspection*”, Lenin went even further. He argued that the Workers’ and Peasants’ Inspection should have the duty of analysing and generalizing the experiences it collects about the organization of state and society on a scientific level. It should see to the modernization of state organization. Lenin held that control must serve a treble purpose: to expose corrupt practices, wasteful work and sabotage; to continuously analyse the experiences of productive work; and to generalize the most noteworthy experiences. Defining the programme for the joint activity of Workers’ and Peasants’ Inspection and the Central Control Commission, he proposed the following division of labour: the members of these bodies should be charged with the duty: “either of attending the meetings of the Political Bureau for the purpose of examining all the documents appertaining to matters that come before it in one way or another; or of devoting their working time to theoretical study, to the study of scientific methods of organising labour; or of taking a practical part in the work of supervising and improving our machinery of state, from the higher state institutions to the lower local bodies, etc.”⁶⁵

The socialist mass control organically contains, the elaboration of a new model instead of operational principles, methods and organizations bringing about bad results or misuses, i.e. the elaboration of plans, conceptions and suggestions, concerning alternative organizations. In case the recommendations of the people’s control prove to be efficient and to the purpose, the people’s control sees to their implementation, too.

It is very clear, therefore, that under socialist democracy people’s control is in an active interrelation with life. It is independent in selecting the object it checks and the methods it employs, and it is independent also in its inferences and the measures it requires to be taken. In this respect, socialist control—whose importance is often underestimated—is all but an equal of operative leadership in weight. People’s control is an organic part of operative leadership, a sort of feed-back. At the same time, people’s control “counter-poises” operative leadership in two aspects. On the one hand, starting out from the aspect of *Sollen* it confronts the “ideal”, the managerial decisions, the original conceptions concerning the

⁶⁴ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 28. p. 326.

⁶⁵ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 33, pp. 484—485.

methods of procedure, with the "real", with the truly materialized, with Sein. On the other hand, it puts forward the propositions, plans, etc.—elaborated as a result of this conception—as an "ideal" by practical experiences, as an alternative to be realized in a specific ideological form to the practice.

People's control has also another, long-term significance. It facilitates the transition to that state of affairs where each individual takes an active part in administering public affairs, in government. Thus, people's control paves the way for the transition to a society which has made the state superannuated, in which the withering away of the state is completed.

The above-listed forms of mass democracy are embodiments of the principle that, under socialism, all power belongs to the people, and of the practice that the master of the country is the working people.

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Stressing that the working masses have to participate in the management of public affairs *en masse*: in the rallies, and through their representatives, the Marxist theorists and politicians are aware that the urgent tasks cannot be fulfilled fast and effectively unless the broadest masses play an active role in their realization. The truth of this view has been proved by historical facts. Let us take the Soviet Union as an example. Without the active and conscious attitude of the working masses, the following great problems and tasks could not have been solved: the fight against Foreign Intervention, the elimination of famine, the epidemics and the shortage of fuel; the rebuilding of the country from the ruins, the overcoming of economic and political difficulties; industrialization, the five-year plans, the collectivization of agriculture, and the cultural and ideological revolution. Then the monumental task of building socialism had to be effected, and victory had to be reached in the Great Patriotic War, after which followed the reconstruction of the country.

When, following the teachings of Marxism-Leninism, socialist power enlists the workers to the administration of public affairs it serves also long-term purposes. It paves the way for the gradual elimination of the division of labour between the government and the governed. It brings closer the era when the government of the people is replaced by the government of things, i.e., the withering away of the state.

Evaluating Marx's analyses of the experiences of the Paris Commune and the conditions of the withering away of the state, Lenin wrote in 1917: "The condition for all this is: the awakening (by a revolutionary

conflagration, revolutionary activity) of the toiling masses, of the *majority* of the population, *their* active participation instead of the officials in state affairs,—proletarian guidance, they must be guided by organised and centralized proletariat. The condition for all this: reducing the working day to 8—6—4 hours;—combining the productive labour of *all* with the participation of *all* in 'state' administration."⁶⁶

Lenin augmented this theoretical programme in his ten theses on Soviet power, which he made public in his address to the Seventh Congress of the Russian Communist (Bolshevik) Party. It is a principal task, he said, to achieve a "transition *through* the Soviet state to the gradual abolition of the state by systematically drawing an ever greater number of citizens, and subsequently *each and every* citizen, into direct and *daily* performance of their share of the burdens of administering the state."⁶⁷

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Mass democracy cannot be constituted and made all-embracing overnight. It presupposes the theoretical and practical development of the working millions, which is a long process. Lenin knew it already before the victory of the Socialist Revolution. As he put it: "We are not utopians. We know that an unskilled labourer or a cook cannot immediately get on with the job of state administration... we demand an immediate brake with the prejudiced view that only the rich, or officials chosen from rich families, are capable of *administering* the state, of performing the ordinary, everyday work of administration. We demand that *training* in the work of state administration be conducted by class-conscious workers and soldiers and ... that a beginning be made at once in training all the working people, all the poor, for this work."⁶⁸

Following the victory of the Socialist Revolution, millions of people were enlisted in the administration of public affairs. The activity, initiative and heroism of the masses grew dynamically. That served the basis for Soviet power, and like was the case following the victory of the socialist revolution in other countries. The vanguard of socialism has been making untiring endeavours to draw more and more masses and all their representatives into socialist construction.

Soviet power strived to enlist ever broader masses in the management of public affairs even during the difficult years of the Civil War.

⁶⁶ V. I. Lenin: *Marxism on the State*. p. 50.

⁶⁷ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 27, p. 156.

⁶⁸ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 26, p. 113.

Addressing the Eighth Congress of the Russian Communist (Bolshevik) Party in 1919, Lenin said that: "The top layer of workers who actually administered Russia during the past year, who bore the brunt of the work in carrying out our policy, and who were our mainstay—this layer in Russia is an extremely thin one." In Lenin's view this was caused by grave shortage of intelligent, educated and able leaders in Russia. "At this Congress", Lenin continued, "we shall devise practical means of utilising ever new forces on a mass scale in industry and . . . in the rural districts, of enlisting in Soviet activities workers and peasants who are on, or even below, the average level. Without their assistance on a mass scale further activities . . . will be impossible."⁶⁹

By the late 1919 the victories scored in the battle front, the results of socialist construction in the home front and the self-sacrificing activity of the workers had convinced and roused to activity the until then indifferent masses. The labouring peasantry, the intelligentsia, and other strata which took part in productive labour directly, started gradually to follow the call of the Party and rally behind the Soviet state.

This is how Lenin commented on these events: "Every new section of workers and peasants that has not yet been drawn into our work is . . . our true friend and ally." Speaking at the Seventh All-Russia Congress of Soviets, he went on: "In the course of our Party work and our Soviet practice we must approach non-party people . . . not for the purpose of winning them over to our side immediately, or of drawing them into the Party—that is not so important for us—but of making them understand that their help is needed to save the country."⁷⁰

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The establishment of mass democracy is not a spontaneous process. Even if the workers are awakened from their historical sleep, it does not happen overnight. The assignment of the socialist vanguard must not be conceived of as that of God in the deistic conception. No one should think that it is enough for the socialist vanguard to rouse the masses to activity, and then mass democracy makes itself. No one should cherish illusion that, once the workers heard the summons of the conscious forces of socialism to join in the management of public affairs, a transcendental force drives the workers to launch spontaneous but unified actions.

Some critics mentioning the process of democratization often commit

⁶⁹ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 29, pp. 158—159.

⁷⁰ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 30, p. 230.

these mistakes. They lay undue stress on the need for the broadening of democracy, and the elaboration of additional channels for enlisting people to the administration of public affairs. True, the voicing of these demands in itself is a positive phenomenon. Yet it is not at all enough to say *only that much*, to be contented with *only those* demands. Viewed from a theoretical point of view, that approach is as shallow as the long outdated and refuted views of the anarchist, subjectivist and narrowly economist schools, which emphasized the instinctiveness and spontaneity of the masses. Viewed from a *political and practical* point of view, that approach is erroneous; it attempts to make us believe that the programme of that democratization has already been elaborated and its realization has already become directly the order of the day. In fact, by raising the issue again and again, they make the appearance that nothing but that is *the* issue to be solved. Yet such a treatment of the question falls short of supplying the masses of workers with an unequivocal programme of action. Thus hostile forces might utilize the situation by interpreting and propagating the practical programme of democratization in their own way, in their own interests. Thereby the hostile forces may turn this programme of action to be ostensibly the only "principal basis", and "guideline" or, at least, basis of debate of any effort at democratization. Such phenomena and their consequences could be seen during the events in Czechoslovakia in 1968, following the issuance of the programme of action by the Czechoslovak Communist Party.

Mass democracy cannot be attained unless through the following actions: the conscious initiative of the socialist vanguard, the precise definition of the assignments, the active and exemplary actions of the conscious socialist forces, the organization of the masses and their rousing to effective and purposeful actions, and finally, the resolute actions against the hostile or non-socialist, mistaken and harmful tendencies. Without the leadership and actions of the workers' revolutionary vanguard there is no mass democracy!

Paradoxically as it may sound, mass democracy—a term which makes us think of an unbridled surge of the masses—can be organized and channelled by nobody but the vanguard of the workers.

Naturally, it is impossible for the conscious socialist forces to enforce their conception of democracy upon the masses. In the long run, they cannot indoctrinate the masses with principles and attitudes which ignore the workers' state of intellectual development and readiness to take

democratic action. Lenin was fully aware of this when, in 1917, he explained the Bolsheviks why they should accept the draft Lands Act as proposed by the Social Revolutionaries: "The idea and demands of the majority of the working people are things that the working people must *discard of their own accord*; such demands cannot be either '*abolished*' or '*skipped over*'." ⁷¹

Mass democracy cannot be attained by the manipulation of the masses. It is anything but mass democracy when the people are driven in a direction which they did not choose and do not understand. It is a far cry from mass democracy if the workers are not one with the demand for which they are roused to action.

It should be noted however that the principle of mass democracy is incompatible with the revolutionary vanguard being led by the given intellectual state or by the mood of the masses. It is the duty of the revolutionary vanguard to do its best to raise the level of the workers' consciousness and to rally the workers for the realization of their genuine aspirations. Lenin emphasized that the communists have a twofold task: "You must not sink to the level of the masses. . . . You must tell them the bitter truth. You are in duty bound to call their bourgeois-democratic and parliamentary prejudices what they are—prejudices. But at the same time you must *soberly* follow the *actual* state of the class-consciousness and preparedness of the entire class (not only of its communist vanguard), and of all the working people (not only of its most advanced elements)." ⁷² In his writing, "*The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*", quoted above, Lenin stressed that no stage of development can be "skipped over" in the class-consciousness of the peasantry. As he put it: "We Bolsheviks shall *help* the peasants to discard petty-bourgeois slogans, to *pass* from them as quickly and as easily as possible to socialist slogans." ⁷³

As we have seen, the development of mass democracy requires a high level of consciousness. The sovereignty of the masses must be honoured, the level of their consciousness and their will must be reckoned with. At the same time, the latent energies of the masses must be unleashed in accordance with the voluntary decision of the masses. The whole complex process must take place in an orderly manner.

Organization and consciousness, as represented by the revolutionary

⁷¹ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 28, p. 309.

⁷² V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 31, p. 58.

⁷³ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 28, p. 309.

vanguard, the Party, must permeate the activity of the masses. Thereby, mass actions will assume vast dimensions, while they remain purposeful, effective and successful. *The millions of workers cannot freely assert their sovereignty unless the spontaneity of the masses is overcome!* To put it in paradoxical terms: the genuine sovereignty of the workers cannot be achieved unless their "archetypal" sovereignty, which took shape in a spontaneous socialist form, is "violated".

The politicians who wish to realize mass democracy or to broaden socialist democracy unaware of these fundamental political rules, or with the explicit intent of violating them, are—in the better case—naive and idealistic, whose activity is doomed to failure right from the outset. In the worse case, they are self-styled democrats who are blind to see that, left without a clear-cut socialist programme of action, the masses are attracted instinctively not only by socialism but also by the demagogic petty bourgeois, liberal or sham left-wing "programmes of democratization". These latter trends seem to "offer" more in politics, than the conscious socialist forces which never ignore the real conditions.

Since the non-socialist and anti-socialist slogans and platforms of "democratization" are nothing but eyewash, and their sole aim is to neutralize the masses during the power struggle or even to rouse them against the socialist order, they may seemingly offer more than the socialist forces in their commitment to the people, in their broadness and radicalism. The framers of these "programmes" do not bother themselves with the problems of their implementation. They do not mind if these "programmes" are unrealizable.

Therefore, any "programme of the development of mass democracy" which ignores the leading role of the socialist vanguard—is—directly or indirectly—meant to mislead the masses and, in the final analysis, to destruct socialist order itself.

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The appearance and evolution of socialist mass democracy is *not a spontaneous process*, as we have said it above. It is not based on the people's spontaneous spiritual *enlightenment* and action. Mass democracy cannot and does not make itself, and it cannot be the product of the spontaneous activity of the masses. The democratic activity of the masses is the result of the dialectical interplay of the workers and the conscious socialist forces, where emphasis is laid upon the efforts of the revolutionary vanguard to educate, organize and rally the masses.

On the one hand, the socialist vanguard needs a broad popular support

for achieving the victory of the socialist revolution. In the same way, after the victory of the socialist revolution, it needs an active popular attitude for the construction of the socialist and communist society. On the other hand, in order to rally them to action, the socialist vanguard has to imbue the masses with a class consciousness. And the activity of the masses is never purposeful and effective unless led by their vanguard.

Consequently, the conscious socialist forces have always concentrated on the political education and organization of the masses and their enlisting to the administration of public affairs. This is why Lenin wrote that only the superficial people said that the principal characteristic of the Socialist Revolution was that its enemies were treated with an iron hand. Although under certain conditions the Revolution indeed had to resort to rigorous methods, this was necessary and righteous. It was the organization of the proletarian masses, the working people, which was and is the most profound and lasting characteristic of the Revolution, and which has been the condition of its victory. Nothing but the organization of the millions of workers has been the most favourable condition of the Revolution, and has been the richest source of its triumphs.⁷⁴

What did Lenin mean by the organization of the masses? How did he define the assignment of the revolutionary vanguard? He had in mind a complex activity, the most various forms of influencing the masses.

First, the vanguard is the spearhead of the struggle to dismantle the obstacles in the way of the activity of the masses: the political restrictions of the bourgeois order. The vanguard strives to enlist the workers to the management of public affairs by overcoming their diffidence and timidity.

Second, the vanguard creates favourable conditions for a popular participation in the management of public affairs. Further, it takes numerous complex measures: improves the working and living conditions with due attention paid to leisure, upgrades the level of the education of the population, strives to make more and more people public-spirited and familiar with statesmanship.

Third, the conscious forces of socialism follow with a keen attention the changes in the level of the development of the masses. The vanguard is familiar with the potentials of the masses and spares no effort to rouse them for the realization of the tasks of the society. Addressing the Second

⁷⁴ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 29, pp. 89—90.

All-Russia Trade Union Congress, Lenin was speaking of this latter duty of the vanguard: "The task is to teach the people the art of administration, not from books, not from lectures or meetings..., so that instead of just the vanguard of the proletariat which has been set to command and organise, more and more fresh blood may enter the departments, and this new section may be reinforced by ten others like it. This may seem an immense and difficult task... we can cope with this task and teach vast numbers of working people how to run the state and industry... we can develop practical activity, and shatter that pernicious prejudice... that state administration is the preserve of the privileged few, that it is a special art."⁷⁵

In the organization, education, representation and mobilization of the broadest masses of the working people the social organizations of the masses play an important role. A rule that prevails throughout the whole period of socialist construction is that the public activity of the workers primarily manifests itself in the framework of and through the influencing role played by the activities of the mass organizations and movements, the trade unions, the youth organization, the people's front, etc. Therefore, for mobilizing the masses and for making the most expedient use of their activities it is imperative that the social organizations be functioning in an appropriate way, thereby completely fulfilling the functions for which they were created and which ensure the support of the people. One condition for this is that the mass organs and mass movements should set goals in their activity which suit the given situation. On the one hand, these organs should be capable of finding the quickest and most successful organizational forms and procedures for the attainment of these goals.

In order to improve the work of social organizations, it is necessary that the rank and file membership regard the organization as their own.

This requires that the mass organizations and mass movements fulfill a double, yet inseparable task: (1) they should promote and protect the specific and general rights of their members and they should work for their optimal satisfaction; (2) apart from transmitting the influence of socialism to the working people they represent, these organizations also have the function of realizing the communication of information in another direction: they have to transmit unequivocally the views of the working people represented by them on definite problems and on the

⁷⁵ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 28, pp. 426—427.

national affairs. Speaking of the functions of the trade unions, but with validity to other organizations, János Kádár the First Secretary of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party declared: "It has become our basic task to protect the political power of the working class and the common interest of the people and to assist the building of socialist society. However, the activity of the trade unions must not be confined to this. Although the socialist state guarantees and the laws and collective contracts ensure the rights of the working people, the experiences of our Party indicate that this by itself is not enough. Laws and contracts determining the working and living conditions of the people are implemented also by the people, and occasionally there may be violations of law, and conflicts hurting various interests. . .

Therefore, the trade unions of the working class which has come to power are facing a double task: on the one hand, the protection of the common interests of society, and, on the other hand, the individual worker."^{75/a}

For the meaningful and efficient realization of the functions of social organizations it is indispensable that these organizations function independently and according to their aims. Therefore, the resolution of the 11th Congress of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party declared: "The basis for all our achievements is the close cooperation of the Party and the masses based on mutual trust. The Party broadens its connections with those outside the Party in a direct way and through mass organizations. The purposeful and independent functioning of all state organs as well as their participation in the formulation and realization of the policy lines strengthens the workers' power and increases the efficiency of socialist construction."^{75/b}

How did this situation emerge? The Party expresses and represents the general interests of society and the interests of socialism and communism. It is an organization standing on the highest level of consciousness and organization. It was not accidental that besides the Party other social organizations emerged. On the one hand, these organizations emerge as the representatives of real *separate* interests, on the other hand, they are *organizations which represent less organized masses standing on a lower level of consciousness than the Party*. It is absolutely neces-

^{75/a} *Protocol of the 12th Congress of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party* (In Hungarian) Budapest, 1970, pp. 108—109.

^{75/b} *Ibid.* pp. 488—489.

sary that other social organizations *besides* the Party, wishing to be active in the interests of socialism, may be able to develop their activities fully and to contribute in an independent way to the solution of the tasks of socialist construction.

First, if those social organizations wishing to serve and those actually serving the interests of socialism do not function according to their aims and are not sufficiently independent in their activities, then they are not capable of being active as a force linking the working people with the construction of socialism, because they fail to include the masses, whose representation they undertake, into the shaping of the new society. This, in turn, leads to the diminishing of the mass basis of socialism.

Second, if the activities of these organs are formal, not independent, and fail to fulfil their functions conscientiously, then the particular interests for whose sake they have been constituted are not able to assert themselves adequately in the activities of these organs. In this case, the level of consciousness of the masses does not manifest itself. Through this, the activities of these organs become formal displaying only pseudo-activities, thereby leaving the masses dissatisfied.

The fact that these activities are formal may mislead the Party and the socialist state. If the social organizations expressing the given level of consciousness and development of the masses do not reflect in their actions the mood, standpoint and state of their *own* rank and file membership, the Party will be able to learn only a part or even nothing of the opinion of the masses. This may well have the consequence that the party line is shaped without considering the consciousness and the actions of the masses. This, in turn, may lead to the elaboration of such policy for whose implementation the level of consciousness of the masses has not been assessed adequately and no consideration has been given to the interest of the masses. It may also happen that the rate of policy-implementation does not take into account the wishes as well as the level of consciousness and organization of the masses.

If there are many erroneous assumptions and if the policies serving the noblest aims are not elaborated optimally, then these policies will remain incomprehensible to the masses. As workers are not capable of identifying themselves with policies *they have failed to understand*, this may lead to the loosening of the ties between the socialist leadership and the working people and even to a complete alienation of the Party from the masses and even to confrontation.

The democracy based on mass organizations does not manifest itself

only through the fact that social organizations realize the representation of the working people in the best possible way. Part of this democracy is also the fact that the masses creating these organizations and ensuring their activity should regard them as their own specific forums as well as their own forms of organization and community. This, in turn, becomes a reality only when the leaders and leading bodies of organizations develop a direct relationship with the masses recognizing and asserting equal right for leaders and workers, and if the leaders consciously subordinate themselves to those who have given them their mandate.

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Apart from the given forms of organization of the working people, under socialism the relationship of the masses and their vanguard, the Communist Party, manifests itself in a specific way.

The advent of socialism heralds new conditions for the work of the revolutionary vanguard. Under capitalism only a minority of the working people can realize the necessity of breaking with capitalist order and of waging a conscious, systematic and organized struggle against it. Naturally, this social group—which gradually becomes the vanguard of the working class—is not alone in its struggle. It strives to constantly raise the level of the consciousness and activity of the remaining labouring classes. However substantial numerical gains it may score, under capitalist conditions the socialist vanguard cannot raise the dominant part of the workers to its own level of development, not even near to that. Thus a specific difference between the vanguard and the toiling masses is consolidated. Try as it might, under capitalism the vanguard cannot eliminate the necessarily developing differences; under capitalist circumstances the vast masses may not reach the level of consciousness, organization and activity which is represented by the vanguard. Should the vanguard attempt to bridge the differences by downgrading its own standards, it would be no more a vanguard.

But there really exists one aspect where the vanguard can heavily reduce its difference from the bulk of the workers in awareness, activity and organization: it makes the broadest masses of workers realize the hatefulness of the exploiters, and stirs them to action against the exploiters. It is in this field that the vanguard strives to raise or bring nearer the broadest masses of workers to its own level. This is a realistic requirement though it is not always realized through intellectual development, but rather through a practical revolutionary practice. It was in the era of socialist revolutions that this requirement was met. By the

strength of the outcome of their actions, that time the masses were marching shoulder to shoulder with the vanguard. In the exploiting class society the vanguard was not in the position to and, therefore, did not define any objective aims more ambitious than that.

It is the knowledge of the discrepancy between the objectives of the vanguard and the given state of the consciousness, activity and organization of the bulk of the toiling masses which under capitalism has been encouraging the vanguard to take untiring efforts. These endeavours result in the increased awareness and activity of the masses.

In the course of the socialist revolution, under the leadership of the Party, the conscious forces of socialism, the masses of workers overthrow the power of the bourgeoisie and establish a new political order, which opens broad vistas for the activity of the masses of workers. Even after the liberation of the masses, the evolution of mass democracy is a long process. Thus, in the period immediately following the victory of the socialist revolution, the revolutionary vanguard remains the spearhead and source of new cadres for the advocates of the new order. Throughout the ebbs and flows of the revolution the bulk of the working masses fluctuate in their support for the revolutionary vanguard. This is what Lenin wrote of this situation in 1919: "the Soviets, which by virtue of their programme are organs of government *by the working people*, are in fact organs of government *for the working people* by the advanced section of the proletariat, but not by the working people as a whole."⁷⁶ This means that soon after the revolution, the government implements the programme of "for the people, in the name of the people and supported by the people." To the extent that the workers are enlisted to the administration of public affairs, administration done in the spirit of the slogans: "for the people, in the name of the people and supported by the people", assumes the additional characteristic of being carried out by the people.

Under socialism the conscious forces of socialism must not be content with the elimination of the specific "division of labour" between the government and the governed, which is deep-rooted in capitalism and its vestiges. It must not be the objective of the conscious socialist forces to replace the capitalist-type administration with another one—which may differ from its antecedent in its purposes, personnel and principles of operation, but—which excludes the masses of workers from the

⁷⁶ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 29. p. 183.

government. Their aim must not be and is not to freeze the development of the exercise of power at the level of government "in the name and with the support of the people". Their long-range goal—whose attainment presupposes the construction of communism—is to eliminate all division of labour whatsoever, including the one between the government and the governed. That long-term object cannot be realized unless it is prepared by adequate measures taken already during the construction of socialism. This means in terms of political management *the participation of the masses of workers in the running of the state, thereby facilitating the withering away of the state and all forms of institutional government*. Therefore, it is the duty of the revolutionary vanguard to fully implement the principle that, under socialism, government is done not only "for the benefit and with the support of the workers", but also together with the masses of workers, "through the workers".

The organizing of the masses of workers (in the Leninist sense of the word "organize") for an active participation in the running of the state and the conscious shaping of history is, therefore, the continuation and accomplishment of the mission which the Party, the revolutionary vanguard, started to carry out for the benefit of the working people under capitalism.

6.2. The Unity of Direct and Representative Democracy

Under socialism the essential characteristic of the democratic exercise of power is that direct democracy and representative democracy are closely interconnected, they mutually suppose and complement each other.⁷⁷

As far as direct democracy is concerned, it manifests itself in the diverse forms of mass democracy. For a detailed description, of its mode of appearance see the foregoing chapter. *Direct* democracy for all the workers is part and parcel of socialist democracy. The conscious working masses take part in defining the course of the main political and social processes and in the administration of public affairs. The government heeds the

⁷⁷ The elaborate discussion of direct democracy and representative democracy as well as their interaction would be beyond the scope of this work. We confine ourselves to just one aspect of the theme: the relationship of the masses' direct democratic actions and the forms and methods of representative democracy.

resolutions adopted at the various meetings of the workers. The workers' initiative, attitudes and actions have far-reaching influence on the government. Those who say that direct democracy does not exist under socialism or that it has been introduced only recently, challenge tangible facts, so they talk nonsense. The everyday practice of the countries which build communism and socialism has proved that the workers have the say in running the state.

Socialist democracy is not confined to the workers' direct actions. It also involves elements of representative democracy: authority delegated to people's representatives and people's representative bodies. Under socialism the transition of direct democracy to representative democracy is necessary. The process, however, is not harmful to direct democracy. In fact, it facilitates the further development of direct democracy.

First, because of direct popular action: participation in mass meetings and conferences and in managing public affairs, must not develop into continuous and unproductive sessions. The purpose of a meeting should be the definition of targets and the ways and means of their achievement as well as the election of those responsible for their fulfilment.

But the fulfilment itself is naturally outside the duty of meetings. Obviously, it takes place later and under other circumstances.

The realization of the workers' decisions reflects the transition of direct democracy to representative democracy. Even with the participation of the masses decision-making and implementation do not necessarily take place at the same time, and there is a difference between those who pass the decisions and those who implement them. Namely, the direct democratic action of the masses cannot be conscious and purposeful action by itself. In its "primordial" form, the activity of the masses is characterized by spontaneity. Yet, the workers have to transcend this spontaneity if they wish to produce real results.

Therefore, in the implementation of the people's decision, they have to divide labour among themselves and find the best determined forms of organization serving the evolvment of mass activity. That, in turn, requires the conscious activity of socialist forces. Even if the group of decision-makers is identical with those persons carrying out actual decisions, there is a great difference between direct democracy in decision-making and conscious, planned implementation, the latter being of an indirect nature. Such a complex process requires the employment of indirect forms.

Second direct democratic forms are adequate for the definition of

only the chief objectives and for the drawing of only the guidelines for their realization. The minute problems of execution can never become the concern of the major forums of popular discussion. They have to be assigned to those directly responsible for the job. This means, however, that the masses cannot participate in each phase of the process directly. As for the ways and means of execution, the will of the masses is asserted only indirectly.

Third, the transition of direct democracy to representative democracy can also be seen when the mass meetings and other popular forums authorize certain workers or groups of workers to put the decisions into practice or to control their implementation. Here decision-makers are not identical with those persons who direct the implementation. Since the latter become leaders, as such, they have greater rights than the former. They are the superiors whose power originates in the masses. The masses may exert only an indirect influence upon them.

Fourth, the fact that the implementation of the tasks becomes the sole responsibility of certain people means, on the one hand, that the working masses assure a measure of leeway for their leaders and, on the other, that—at least for a certain period of time—they do not interfere with their work. Viewed from this aspect, in a sense democracy means an *a posteriori* category. This is a precondition of successful democratic government. If—in order to avoid any misinterpretation, debate or mistake—the working masses predetermined each minute detail of the activity of the executors of tasks, the latter would be robbed of all freedom of action, and would be incapable of coping with any unforeseen problem. It is an indispensable condition of a firm government that the work of the leaders be evaluated and—if necessary—rectified only retrospectively.

A. D. Lindsay is right in his view that: “if you set up a government in which men will immediately be hauled up if they do wrong, they may very easily be hauled up if they do right and you will not get a government capable of doing anything at all.”⁷⁸

The assurance of a certain amount of freedom of action to the leaders, their authorization to pass decisions on their own in the spirit of the workers’ resolutions mean that the workers may have only an indirect influence on the fulfilment of their decisions, their resolutions ensure only the framework for the day-to-day work.

Since the evaluation of the leaders’ activity is suspended for certain

⁷⁸ A. D. Lindsay: Op. cit. pp. 64—65

periods of time, and that assessment always has a *post-factum* character, there are certain periods of time when the fulfilment of certain objectives requires the temporary replacement of direct democracy with representative democracy.

Fifth, it is a vital issue of mass democracy that the will and interests of the working people should be asserted not only in the bodies and institutions directly accountable to the masses. The same should apply also to other organs, such as: the medium and high-level directing bodies of the state, economy and culture, in the mass media as well as the scientific research institutes. For the meeting of this requirement, the socialist vanguard has to ensure that the workers assert their interests from below upwards in every field of the life of the society. But this task cannot be solved through direct mass actions and its chief form, direct democracy, as exercised in small communities. Therefore, *the masses' direct actions must be augmented with the forms of representative democracy*. The latter allow the working masses to have a say in the diverse spheres of social life through their delegates, representative organs and other people's organizations. They may use these bodies for influencing and checking the entire process of government and the work of the most various social institutions.

It is the institutions of representative democracy which enable the working people to make its exercise of power complete. That makes the working people capable of determining in the entirety of social life the targets, content and spirit of every activity as well as the basic modes and forms of procedure.

The workers cannot have their decisions fulfilled, and cannot exercise their power successfully except through the transformation of the direct mass actions into the forms of representative democracy.

One of the specific manifestations and means of indirect democracy is the socialist state which operates as a specific public authority.

The socialist state is in the first place made up of various organs of people's representation, i.e. the parliament and the various level councils (i.e. local government). These are the organizational expressions of people's sovereignty.

The various institutions of socialist state power which assert the interests of the workers through state measures, i.e. in an indirect way, are subordinated to them. The socialist state machinery is a specific branch of the division of labour which deals with the government of people as well as the regulation of defence and foreign relations in a professional

way. The separation of the state organization and society exists also under conditions of socialism. From that aspect, the form of the administration of social affairs is similar to the administration of other hitherto existing states.

The service of the socialist community to be realized in a state organization which is separated from the people is necessary for the following reasons:

1. Owing to various objective and subjective conditions, the majority of the workers of socialist society is at present not yet objectively in the situation to administer community affairs regularly and professionally. Therefore, it is indispensable that the specific branch of the division of labour come into existence. This is constituted by the group of officials and by a corresponding organization the state apparatus which is capable of regularly and continually administering public affairs in a professional way.

2. The second reason for the state administration of public affairs is that at the present development level of social circumstances the possibility exists that certain partial interests become independent as against the social interest. In human conduct, the egoistic interests of certain individuals and groups may prove to be a stronger dividing-force than the public interest. Thus it happens quite often that these former interests are asserted to the detriment of social interests. For avoiding this, or—if it manifests itself—to countervail these forces in order to satisfy community interests an organization is necessary which apart from intellectually influencing and having various social regulations is capable to enforcing community interests even through coercion. Such an organization is the communist state.

On the other hand, such interests may also distort the work of the self-governing organs of society. Therefore, we have to see to it that the administration of public affairs be not affected in a wrong way by individual and group interests. The existence of an organization which independently of these factors considers the full assertion of these public interests ought to be ensured. This is one of the reasons why in socialism the power positions are not completely proportionately distributed among the population. Efforts are being made to give jurisdiction primarily to those groups and persons who are a safeguard of the consistent implementation of the socialist line. This is one of the criteria of giving someone a job in the state organization. Therefore, the machinery itself provides a personal guarantee for the optimal assertion of public interest.

3. It must also be taken into account that the repulsing of internal and external anti-socialist forces requires a well-prepared, professional organization having adequate weaponry which is capable of successfully protecting the socialist order. Such an organization may only arise within the framework of the socialist state. The socialist state ensures the protection of socialism by selecting the appropriate people, by making them independent, by educating them adequately and by providing them with weaponry.

The socialist state may be the main means of socialist construction because it is the general main power all over the country. This organization conducts a regulatory activity obligatory for all social spheres and all members of society. The state is capable of asserting the will of the ruling class through the most varied means and procedures. Therefore, state regulation, especially when it is also approved of and backed by the working people, is an extremely effective means of the regulation of social circumstances and of the construction of new society.

Owing to these causes, the assertion of community and people's interest through the means and procedures of the socialist state is not some kind of subjective decision, but—under the present historical circumstances—the only possible and necessary means to successfully construct socialism. Therefore, concepts according to which at the present phase of development the curtailing of the influence of the socialist state is the order of the day and consequently the powers of the socialist state have to be limited, are erroneous. This is why we read in the official programme of the Hungarian Socialist Worker's Party the following: "The maintenance as well as the strengthening of the socialist state is necessary as long as world peace is threatened by the existence of imperialism, and as long as the attempts of external and internal reactionary forces aimed at creating disorder may impede the construction of socialism. Also the internal development of our society renders the existence of the state necessary as long as the basic tasks of economic and cultural construction may be solved through the managing and organizing activity of the state."

From the existence of the independent governing and public administration apparatus of the socialist state, from the occasional resort to coercion by this organization, and furthermore from the fact that the state apparatus is also the organ of the government of the people, it follows that occasionally it asserts the interests of the working people

in a form and through a method which may seem to be alien to the interests of the people.

In spite of this, the socialist state separates itself from the people not as regards the content of its functioning, but solely through the specific form of the division of labour.

1. The basic content of state activity is that it serves the people and it functions in its interest.

2. Between the working people and the state apparatus a close personal relationship unfolds. The whole governing and power apparatus is recruited from the working classes and working strata.

3. The state regularly draws into the administration of the community and state affairs the masses working outside the state administration. Thus, e.g., courts, social courts, the councils and the organs of people's control are organizations which include the representatives of the working people. Besides that, there are a number of social-state organizations in which workers participate voluntarily having partly authority jurisdiction (Workers' Militia, Voluntary Police, the health network of the Red Cross).

4. Finally, through the means of socialist democracy the people can influence as well as control the activity of the state.

In order that the socialist state be able to function successfully it has first of all to rely on the masses; it has to gain their confidence and their active support. On the other hand, the socialist state has to become an organ which solves its task in a scientific and conscious way by creating the most modern organizational forms for its activities and by applying the most efficient procedures.

The main means of and the organizational form of getting mass support and optimally using the energy of the masses is the system of socialist democracy. The development of socialist democracy activates the working people. Apart from that, it does not only create favourable conditions for the state organs to rely on the masses in order to successfully solve the tasks, but it helps the improvement of the socialist state, too.

In order to bring about a situation in which according to the Marxist principle, the state becomes transformed from an organ superordinated to society to an organ subordinated to it, it is by all means necessary that the state be guided by the Party and the activity of the state organs be always controlled in a democratic and socialist way. In order to insure this, it has to be guaranteed that the organs elected by the people be

genuine organs of power. Elected bodies are not the surface of an institutional structure, but they constitute the superior organs of a certain sector together with the pertaining superior organs of the professional apparatus.

In order to ensure that these elected bodies be able to fulfil such functions, a greater say must be given to the masses in determining the composition of elected bodies as well as in controlling and influencing their behaviour. They have to have greater freedom to be able to call their representatives to account concerning the fulfillment of their mandates. To this end, we have laws prescribing voting by individual districts, having several representatives at the elections as well as ensuring the right of recall. These rules may contribute to the emergence of elected bodies whose composition is in greater accord with the expectations of the electorate. They may also ensure that the respect shown for the members of the organization is increased and the people trust them more. Through these measures we may help the assertion of the principle that elected members of various organs derive their mandate from the people and they are political leaders responsible for their work not only as experts, but also as politicians, as the shapers of public interest.

In his contribution to the February 1973 session of the National Council of the Hungarian Patriotic People's Front, János Kádár called attention to the specific dialectical relationship between direct democracy and representative democracy, between direct democracy and the disciplined fulfilment of the operative directives of the people's leading organs. He stressed that *socialist democracy involves also discipline and order and not only a room for free discussion*. Socialist democracy is not only the institution of free consultations and it does not only entail the right for ever broader masses to the administration of public affairs. Besides that, socialist democracy is much more than that. It is to serve the welfare and happiness of the people, to promote the attainment of socialist objectives. It is a rule under socialist democracy that, once we have entered into a discussion, i.e., we exercised the freedom of debate, we should reach an agreement on what is to be done. And in our common efforts to realize our goals, we should adhere to a socialist discipline, which is part and parcel, in fact, the goal and meaning of socialist democracy.

Let us now focus on how representative democracy complements direct democracy. *First*, it helps overcome the uncertainty over the ways and means of the realization of the targets. The forums of direct mass democ-

racy must confine themselves to defining the guidelines, the practical questions of execution are beyond their scope. The following measures need to be taken in order to have the envisaged targets put into practice: the entire structure of execution has to be organized, those in charge of directing the activity have to be authorized to employ all the capacities available for the assignment.

Second, the institutions of representative democracy are instrumental in overcoming the uncertainty of the masses over their tasks: they resolutely and purposefully orient the masses for the fulfilment of certain objectives. *Third and last*, the institutions of representative democracy are instrumental in the optimal realization of the decisions brought by the workers in directly democratic forms. In other words, the decisions of the masses do not remain on the level of *Sollen* and they are honoured in a democratic way: they are put into practice, thereby asserting the will and interests of the people. It can be ascertained, therefore, that *representative democracy* is instrumental in having the business aspect to prevail in the workers' direct meeting over the autotelic airing of questions. Thus, the masses of people can see the fruits of their efforts and that it is worth-while engaging in the management of public affairs.

As we have seen, the forms of representative democracy serve the realization of the targets formulated in the forums of direct democracy, and they enrich the content of mass democracy. All this facilitates the enhancing of the workers' activity and, thereby, the unfoldment of direct democracy.

6.3. The Mutual Subordination of the Leaders and the Governed

Starting out from the practice of mass democracy, socialist democracy is capable of resolving the relationship of the leaders and the governed in a new way.

The relationship between the leaders and the governed is unequivocally a hierarchical one in all the exploiting societies, including the democracies. The leader issues directives and the governed obey them. This principle is clearly defined by Max Weber. He writes that, "there are only two choices: either a democracy with a leader disposing over a machinery (it is an apparatus which is an obedient tool in the hand of the leader —A. K.) or a democracy without a single leader, here the rule is exercised by "professional politicians", who are devoid of the qualities of

a charismatic leader. In the latter case, the opposition within the ruling party describes such a rule the rule of a "clique".⁷⁹

It is clear from the wording of the alternatives which of them is preferred by the author. To make his stand even clearer, it is worth quoting a part of an interview on democracy with General Erich Ludendorff, Germany's quartermaster general in World War I, who was one of the first advocates of Fascism and took part in the abortive Nazi putsch of 1923. In his conversation with the general, Weber declared that, once a democracy has been achieved, the people choose a leader in whom it trusts. Then the leader says: "*hold your mouth and follow my orders*". From that onwards, the people and party must not interfere in his affairs... As time passes by, the people may administer justice and, if the leader committed mistakes, he is worthy of the rope, Weber said. Small wonder, the pro-Fascist Ludendorff fully identified himself with such a view.⁸⁰

Naturally, Max Weber was not alone with his interpretation of democracy. He expounded a principle of bourgeois democracy with an openness which is rare. This principle is in line with the bourgeois interests, and is widely asserted.

Even where the above conception of democracy is embraced, certain trappings of democracy are preserved, such as the elections, publicity, the right of free discussion, observance of the public opinion, etc. A democracy based on government by one man or other paternalistic forms of democracy is compatible with the right of the people to air their opinion about the problems, the right of opposition, which has no impact on the decision-making process, the right to choose between the alternatives which are put forward by the capitalist oligarchies, or to choose between groups of leaders selected by these same oligarchies. These institutions of democracy serve nothing but the optimum functioning of the *regime* by operating as safety valves.

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The principle (which is not always fully asserted) of the relationship between the leaders and the governed is entirely different from that under socialism. Already in the beginnings of the Russian working-class movement, Lenin denounced the primitive interpretation of democracy ac-

⁷⁹ M. Weber: Op. cit. p. 429.

⁸⁰ C. W. Mills and H. H. Gerth eds.: *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*. New York, 1963, p. 42.

according to which there should be a full rotation of leading offices within the party of the workers.

In his work, *What Is To Be Done?*, Lenin refers to a book on British trade unionism written by Sidney Webb and Mrs. Beatrice Webb, in which the authors sum up the decades long experience of the British working-class movement about the rotation of office. Lenin stressed that such a conception of democracy is absurd, and he emphasized "the necessity for representative institutions, on the one hand and for full-time officials, on the other." Lenin refers to Kautsky's ideas, too. Kautsky derided the demagogues within the working-class movement who demanded that the people's newspapers should be edited by themselves. "Kautsky shows the need for *professional* journalists, parliamentarians, etc., for the Social-Democratic leadership of the proletarian class struggle...direct legislation by the whole people...can be applied only relatively in modern society."⁸¹

Also in his *What Is To Be Done?* Lenin writes that the German workers' movement is often mocked at because its tested leaders are re-elected on many occasions. He comments on that in the following way: "But the Germans only smile with contempt at these demagogic attempts to set the 'masses' against the 'leaders',...to rob the movement of its solidity and stability by undermining the confidence of the masses in their 'dozen wise men' (i.e., the group of the Party's top leaders). Political thinking is sufficiently developed among the Germans, and they have accumulated sufficient political experience to understand that without the 'dozen' tried and talented leaders...professionally trained and schooled by long experience, and working in perfect harmony, no class in modern society can wage a determined struggle." Generalizing these experiences, Lenin adds: "no revolutionary movement can endure without a stable organisation of leaders maintaining continuity."⁸²

Lenin stressed the need for professional leaders within the workers' movement also in his *Left-Wing Communism—An Infantile Disorder*, written in 1920. It is essential for everyone to realize, he wrote, that the masses are made up by classes and that these classes are led by parties. Political parties, in turn, are "as a rule, run by more or less stable groups composed of the more authoritative, influential and experienced mem-

⁸¹ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 5, p. 481.

⁸² Ibid. pp. 461 and 464.

bers, who are elected to the most responsible positions, and are called leaders.”⁸³

Lenin points out that fundamentally it is necessary and inevitable to set up a separate group of professional leaders in view of the following reasons: determined by the conditions of their everyday life, the broad working masses lack the required schooling and have an undeveloped awareness and activity. For these reasons, they would not be able to assume the diverse social responsibilities. On the other hand, the bourgeoisie can afford to draw on its profit and employ managers to control the production. By resorting to this method, the members of the bourgeoisie may find time to engage in politics. That solution is out of the reach of the broad working masses.

In light of the above reasons, it is in the vital interest of the working class to train those professional leaders who find it to be their calling to direct the class struggle.

The principles as expounded by Lenin hold true also in the period of the construction of socialism and during the building of communism. The only difference is that now they apply not only to the Party but also to the whole society. In the new situation, not only the Party, but the entire society as well needs well-trained leaders. Nothing but the party of the workers has been able to train, direct and control such leaders.

In the period immediately after a socialist revolution, the party of the workers has just few such trained leaders. Thus, it is necessary to employ also the non-socialist experts. This may create a paradoxical situation. It may well happen that the party of the workers enters into struggle to achieve that non-socialist (or even anti-socialist) experts should be empowered to supervise the realization of minor tasks (but, of course, adhering to the socialist line). That is why Lenin stressed after the Revolution that it was necessary to put every available expert—including those holding bourgeois views and those who belong to the capitalist class—on minor leading posts and see to the execution of their proper directions.

Understandably, this policy of the Party was not understood by the broad masses. It even provoked opposition, which was reflected within the Party by the emergence of factions. But Lenin was untiring in his efforts to explain that: “We must make use of the specialists in all

⁸³ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 31, p. 41.

spheres of organisation, wherever we, lacking the experience and scientific training of the old bourgeois specialists, are ourselves naturally unable to cope with our tasks. We are not utopians who think that socialist Russia must be built up by men of a new type; we must utilize the material we have inherited from the old capitalist world. We are placing people of the old type in new conditions, keeping them under proper control, under the vigilant supervision of the proletariat, and making them do the work we need... They must be entrusted with certain work, but a vigilant eye must also be kept on them... At the same time we must also learn from them. Above all, no political concessions whatever must be made to these gentlemen whose services we are using wherever possible."⁸⁴

Managing activities have to become separate not only because of the expertise of leaders, but also because of the fact that many among the builders of socialism are still affected by petty-bourgeois views, including the lack of a self-conscious approach to labour and the interests of the community. Therefore, socialist construction cannot be effective unless it is directed by a well-organized and well-trained machinery of leaders, set up for the purpose, which employs the conventional methods of guidance: subordination and supervision.

This is why Lenin emphasized already before the Socialist Revolution that: "Abolishing the bureaucracy at once, everywhere and completely, is out of the question. It is a utopia... We are not utopians, we do not 'dream' of dispensing *at once* with all administration, with all subordination. These anarchist dreams, based upon incomprehension of the tasks of the proletarian dictatorship, are totally alien to Marxism,... we want the socialist revolution with people as they are now, with people who cannot dispense with subordination, control and 'foremen and accountants'... At the same time, Lenin pointed out that: "A beginning can and must be made at once, overnight, to replace the specific 'bossing' of state officials by the simple functions of 'foremen and accountants' "⁸⁵

The events following the Socialist Revolution have proved the significance of Lenin forecast. Utmost organization and strictest discipline were and are even today necessary for the fulfilment of the tasks of socialist construction.

Already in late 1917 Lenin took a stand against holding too many

⁸⁴ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 29, p. 24.

⁸⁵ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 25, pp. 425—426.

meetings and called for strictest discipline and an unconditional subordination to the leaders. He raised the issue again in the beginning of 1918: "at the present moment we are immediately confronted by the tasks of strictly separating discussion and airing questions at meetings from unfailing execution of all instructions of the person in charge. This means separating the necessary, useful preparation of the masses for executing a certain measure and checking up on its execution, from the actual execution itself."⁸⁶

In his work, *The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government*, Lenin reiterated this view: "we must learn to combine the 'public meeting' democracy of the working people... with *iron* discipline while at work, with *unquestioning obedience* to the will of a single person, the Soviet leader, while at work."⁸⁷

These guidelines are valid even today. In the present phase of socialist construction—like before—socialist democracy has a dual task: to increase, develop and effectively use the activity of the masses, on the one hand, and to assure the effective work of the leaders, on the other. The fulfilment of this binary requirement is *sine qua non* of the success of the work of the leaders in socialist society and of the full construction of a new society.

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That the governed are obliged to obey the directions of the leadership for the firm, continuous and effective management of the society, is just one aspect of the relationship of the leaders and the governed in socialist society. The *other* predominating aspect originating in mass democracy, is the Marxist-Leninist requirement under which the leaders must be and really are subordinated to *the governed*, i.e., to those who authorized them to occupy the leading posts.

Though this tenet was established and stressed on many occasions by the classics of Marxism, it is often disregarded or even forgotten. In his work, entitled: *The Civil War in France*, Marx writes that in the Paris Commune the workers, representative bodies, just like the staffs of the police, administrative, judicial and other institutions were chosen on an *elective* basis, and they were *accountable to and removable by the people*...

As he put it: "universal suffrage was to serve the people, constituted

⁸⁶ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 27, p. 213.

⁸⁷ Ibid. p. 271.

in Communes, as individual suffrage serves every other employer in the search for the workmen and managers in his business."⁸⁸

In the second draft for *The Civil War in France* (written immediately before writing the final version) detailing the above scheme of filling the leading posts in a Commune-type state, Marx characterized this organization in the following way. In this system, he wrote, initiative in every field of social life originates in the Commune. In one word, every public function is disposed of by rank-and-file elements of the commune... No one should allege that central functions, which are necessitated by national interests, are abolished. These functions survive but, unlike in the old machine of government, the officials may not rise to high offices since the tasks are solved by *communal officials*. Thus, they are at all times under a real communal control. Thus public functions would cease to be private property, which is given by the central government to its stooges.⁸⁹

Lenin describes the relationship of those in charge of governmental tasks and the governed under socialism, in a similar way. He writes in *State and Revolution* that: "A beginning can and must be made at once, overnight, to replace the specific "bossing" of state officials by the simple functions of "foremen and accountants". Lenin puts forward the following proposal: "We shall reduce the role of state officials to that of simply carrying out our instructions as responsible revocable, modestly paid "foremen and accountants" (of course, with the aid of technicians of all sorts, types and degrees). This is our proletarian task."⁹⁰

Lenin dealt with the problem also in the drafts for *State and Revolution*. In one of them he writes that state power and its future activity can be maintained only by turning its machinery "for service to the mass revolutionary movement" and making the state function "under its control."⁹¹

Following the Socialist Revolution, Lenin formulated the concrete practical requirements to the officials in the political, economic and other domains, on the basis of the above theoretical stand of Marxism. Speaking at the November 17, 1917 meeting of the Petrograde Soviet,

⁸⁸ K. Marx and F. Engels: *Selected Works*. Vol. 2, p. 221.

Marx-Engels művei (Collected Works) Vol. 17. Budapest, 1968, p. 311. In Hungarian

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 25, p. 426.

⁹¹ Ibid. p. 51.

Lenin said of the question of providing employment for people who held managerial posts in the former *regime*: "We value everyone who is willing to work but he must not behave as a boss but as an equal, under workers' control."⁹² Almost four years later, criticizing Trotsky's theses on the trade unions, Lenin once again touched upon the relationship of the workers and management. In the 20th point of his thesis, Trotsky writes that the mass of workers must come to know the industrial management above it, and that it has to renew and reaffirm its confidence in it. But in contradiction to that Lenin held that it is the industrial management which must strive to win the confidence of the working masses and not the other way round.⁹³ In December 1922 Lenin defined the task of the heads of state institutions. His words are binding on every man in charge under socialism. As he put it: "The chief of a state institution must possess a high degree of personal appeal and sufficiently solid scientific and technical knowledge to be able to check people's work. That much is basic. Without it the work cannot be done properly. On the other hand, it is very important that he should be administering and should have a worthy assistant, or assistants in the matter."⁹⁴

In the draft for the article: *The Immediate Tasks of Soviet Government*, Lenin once again stresses a fundamental tenet of the Marxist interpretation of democracy. Describing it as a practical task of socialist construction, he writes: "The masses must have the right to choose responsible leaders for themselves. They must have the right to replace them, the right to know and check each smallest step of their activity. They must have the right to put forward any worker without exception for administrative functions."⁹⁵

Under socialist democracy the various leading organs and their officials must take into consideration the opinions of the working masses. Not only those which coincide with theirs, but also those which are in variance with theirs. The reader will recall that one of the initial decrees issued upon the October Revolution covered the question of land. When preparing that decree, the Soviet Government used without the slightest alteration a draft drawn up by the Social-Revolutionary Party on the basis of 242 rural constituencies. This is how Lenin explained the move:

⁹² V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 26, p. 294.

⁹³ (Leninist Reader), Ленинский сборник Vol. 36, p. 171.

⁹⁴ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 36.

⁹⁵ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 27, p. 212.

"As a democratic government, we cannot ignore the decision of the masses of the people, even though we may disagree with it."⁹⁶ Raising the issue again in 1918, he said: "The majority will is binding on us always, and to oppose the majority will is to betray the revolution."⁹⁷

It is not the sole task of the officials of the socialist machinery to heed and act in accordance with the interests and will of the working masses (which is, besides, the specific Socratic *daimonion* of their activity). They also have to *continuously strive to dismantle the differences between the leading organs and the workers*. Lenin had this assignment in mind when, in 1919, he wrote that it was necessary to achieve: "a maximum simplification of the apparatus—(i.e. the different organizations of the Soviet system.—A. K.)—which must be not only as close as possible to the needs of the masses, but also something they can readily understand and participate in independently."⁹⁸

That means that it is duty of socialist leadership to direct, educate and actuate to action the working people in such a way that they should be able to reach ever higher levels of development. Efforts have to be made to render more and more people able to dispose themselves of the functions which are now carried out by a relatively limited circle of "foremen and accountants". In the course of proceeding towards communism, the long-term target is to have those tasks solved directly by the whole working people itself.

Consequently, the leaders have a "restricted mandate". This means that they are authorized to carry out a *certain field of activity*: the expert assertion of the interests of the masses of people. Their mandate is valid as long as they dispose of this function. Furthermore, they are men of *authority solely within the framework of executing a given partial task*, by which the interests of the people may be effectively represented. They are accountable to the whole people for their work. Lenin referred to this fact when—in spring 1918—he wrote that no effort can be spared to avoid: "the slightest chaos or disorder as regards who is responsible in *each individual case for definite executive functions, for carrying out definite orders, for controlling a definite joint labour process during a certain period of time*."⁹⁹

⁹⁶ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 26, p. 260.

⁹⁷ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 28, p. 175.

⁹⁸ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 30, p. 74.

⁹⁹ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 27, p. 212. (Italics are mine—A. K.)

The mandate of a leader does not give him immunity from a many-faceted control by those who gave him the mandate. The latter control regularly whether he abides by the conditions of his restricted mandate. As Lenin put it in 1918: "The more resolutely we now have to stand for a ruthlessly firm government, for the dictatorship of individuals *in definite processes of work*, in definite aspects of *purely executive* functions, the more varied must be the forms and methods of control from below in order to counteract every shadow of a possibility of distorting the principles of Soviet government, in order repeatedly and tirelessly to weed out bureaucracy."¹⁰⁰

The basis of the above Marxist conception of the relationship of the leaders and the governed is that in socialist society men are equal both in theory and in practice. Let us first examine the question from the viewpoint of social station. Since under socialism a leading position is not a virtue in itself, it cannot place its holder above the rest of the workers. The leaders and the governed are equal before the law and they have to observe the same moral standards. According to the basic principles of this society (although in practice these principles are not always enforced consistently), it is not the leading post itself which constitutes the basis for material and moral recognition, but only real accomplishment achieved in both leading and subordinate posts.

A leader gets his mandate for a *definite period* of time, and it is *prolonged only if it is in the interest of the working masses*. It is never a *carte blanche* and its holder may at any time be revoked. As a rule, a leader does not enjoy the monopoly of decision-making. Party, state, council, trade union and people's front organs—where posts are elective—also take part in it. These elected organs check the work of the professional leaders, the apparatus.

Let us now examine the relationship of the leaders and the governed from the viewpoint of the social function of the leaders. Under socialism the social problems must not be resolved in an authoritative way. *When decision is made over a major issue, that alternative must be chosen which serves the attainment of communism the best*. True, expert direction and adequate guidance are not dispensable, but it is also true that no programme can be put into practice without the performers: the broad masses. Thus, the achievements of socialism are the materialization of the efforts of both the people in charge and the governed. No doubt, in definite

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. p. 275.

fields and time and in connection with the fulfilment of definite tasks, the division of labour between a leader and the people under him entails the subordination of the latter.

But let us repeat that this subordination is confined to a *definite* field, time and task, i.e., it is of a "technical nature" and is linked with only the performance of the given duty. No leading organ, even any of the highest ones (be it charged in the given historical period and by reason of its scope of authority with social assignments of extraordinary importance) should ever attempt to use its superordination for gaining dominance over every field, over every question of social life. The mandate of leadership in a *given field* does not authorize anyone to bring decisions outside his competence. In the long run, the unauthorized managerial actions provoke the opposition of the other affected leading organs, whose interests are damaged, and of the masses of people. Such a conflict is detrimental to socialism. For this reason, the conscious forces of socialism must strive to avoid it. If, despite their efforts, it does happen, they must eliminate it effectively and without delay.

The above-mentioned sub- and superordination must never be rendered absolute. Be it committed by individual leaders or groups of leaders within the socialist leadership of a country, it runs counter to the fundamental principles of socialism to absolutize the relation of the division of labour of "technical character" in any field and to develop it to a general social sub- and superordination.¹⁰¹

As for the sources of these harmful phenomena, they originate not in the last place in the influence of neighbouring capitalist countries and surviving bourgeois ideals, on the one hand, and in the outsize ambition of some to gain dominance over others, on the other, i.e., socialism is not an automatic guarantee against the persons who try to acquire a "special" position.

¹⁰¹ Such tendencies could be seen in the Soviet Union in the activities of Lavrenty Beria and his group, as well as in Hungary in the early 1950s in the activities of some of the leaders of the Hungarian State Security Organ. (E.g.: Mihály Farkas and Gábor Péter.) Due to the intensification of the class struggle in the period after the creation of socialist power, the defence and internal security of the country became of especial importance. This fact was used by some of the leaders of these organs to attempt to seize control over the whole society, i.e. the state and social bodies and, what is more, over the Party itself. Technocratic or manager-type actions occasionally indicate similar strivings. Naturally, the latter are less dramatic and are lesser in magnitude and effectiveness.

For this reason, both Engels and Lenin stressed that when the working class is establishing a socialist state machinery it must "safeguard itself against its own deputies and officials."¹⁰²

The Communist Party of Soviet Russia under the leadership of Lenin spared no effort to combat bureaucracy. For instance, in the debate on trade unions in 1920—21, Lenin, citing a statement from the Programme of the RCP(B): the Soviet state is a workers' state with bureaucratic distortions, pointed out: "We now have a state under which it is the business of the massively organised proletariat to protect itself, while we, for our part, must use these workers' organisations to protect the workers from their state, and to get them to protect our state. Both forms of protection are achieved through the peculiar interweaving of our state measures and our agreeing (or 'coalescing') with our trade unions."¹⁰³ Elsewhere and in the same period, he stressed: "The fight against bureaucracy is a long and arduous one. Excesses can and must be rectified at once. It is not those who point out harmful excesses and strive to rectify them but those who resist rectification that undermine the prestige of the military workers and appointees."¹⁰⁴

It is of utmost importance that in Lenin's view, when a socialist state commits mistakes and therefore the masses have to protect themselves, the state can be described as "a workers' state with bureaucratic distortions". Lenin explained that the term: workers' state is the expression of *the most essential point*, that the representation of the workers' interests is the *fundamental content* of the state's activity. The term: bureaucratic distortions helps us qualify the phenomena in which that content is manifested in a distorted form, misrepresenting the class character of the state.

The Marxist theorists and politicians have often warned the workers to protect themselves against the bureaucratic distortions by deploying safeguards against maladministration. But—unlike the right- and left-wing revisionists and anarchists—they never assume a hostile and distrustful attitude toward the socialist state and its administrative workers. This can be illustrated by the fact that in several congresses of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party words of praise were told about the ac-

¹⁰² Cf. K. Marx and F. Engels: *Selected Works*. Vol. 2, p. 187, and V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 25, pp. 55 and 481.

¹⁰³ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 32, p. 25.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.* p. 52.

tivity of the administrative workers. Every Marxist must be aware that each instance of bureaucratism is nothing but a "distortion", which *does not constitute* an essential specific of this state. Therefore, it cannot be regarded as the chief characteristic of its organization. This organization must be judged by its essential content and not by its distortions. At the same time, everybody should feel it as his duty to combat these phenomena. It should, however, always be born in mind that this struggle should not weaken socialist state and its organizations.

As Lenin put it: "Those who allow the struggle against the distortions of the new system to obscure its content and to cause them to forget that the working class has created and is guiding a state of the Soviet type are incapable of thinking. . . ."¹⁰⁵

How can the people prevent its deputies from misrepresenting its interests?

Those who are biased against the leaders under socialism believe that the solution lies in the periodic exchange of leaders, i.e., in the so-called rotation. No doubt, the regular replacement of the leading personnel may be instrumental to avoid its fossilization, extreme self-assurance and resultant conceit. Yet it cannot guarantee its subordination to the masses and the effective management of socialist society.

The rotation may be "horizontal": officers of economic, political, social, etc. organs—who are on the same level in the hierarchy—would change place. But what is the use of transferring an allegedly corrupt officer from one place to another? It would result only in a shift of the abuse of authority and would leave his supposed self-seeking intentions unpurged.

The rotation could be of a vertical direction: when their spell of office runs out, the lower rank officers would get promoted and their superiors demoted. Since this solution would ignore the quality of performance, no one would be interested to give his utmost since every officer would be inevitably replaced on the day of the expiration of his mandate, without considering his fruitful activity. In fact, the reduction to lower ranks of the bad officers would only disguise their mistakes and obstruct their calling to account. In the system of vertical rotation whole echelons of men in charge would be elevated or downgraded without any real reason. It would have several harmful effects: often the managerial expertise of high echelon officers would be wasted for solving low-keyed

¹⁰⁵ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 33, p. 26.

problems; while for too long a time the unprepared and freshly installed high officers would be forced to ignore the day-to-day issues and concentrate on learning statesmanship itself. Rotation in both directions makes management insecure. It makes incompetence constant, the duration of the training for management becomes lengthy and the number of mistakes committed in this period grows.

Owing to the above-enumerated consequences of "rotation", it cannot be put into practice consistently. Even its most ardent supporters have refrained from applying it on a large scale.

Marxist theorists and politicians are opposed to the doctrinaire principle of rotation. *They advocate the principle of deciding on the renewal or termination of office on the basis of an objective assessment of the concrete performance of the personnel in charge.*

How can the working people assure the objectivity and concreteness of this assessment? How can it manage to subject its leaders to popular control? How can it remain in touch with them and make them devotedly promote its interests?

Marx, Engels and Lenin have extensively dealt with the provisions which can be used to attain these goals. For instance, Marx and Engels stressed in several of their writings that under the Paris Commune two sure methods had been applied to prevent the state and its institutions from domineering instead of serving the society. As Engels put it: "In the first place, it (the Commune—A. K.) filled all posts—administrative, judicial and educational—by election on the basis of universal suffrage of all concerned, subject to the right of recall at any time by the same electors. And, in the second place, all officials, high or low, were paid only the wages received by other workers... In this way an effective barrier to place-hunting and careerism was set up, even apart from the binding mandates."¹⁰⁶

Lenin cites the relevant opinions of Marx and Engels on several places. He stressed that under socialism the administrative workers must never become bureaucrats, i.e. they must never be alienated from the masses, neither should they ever hold themselves aloof the problems of the people. He called for bringing about a system where not only election is realized, "but also recall at any time; pay not to exceed that of a workman; immediate introduction of control and supervision by *all*, so that

¹⁰⁶ K. Marx and F. Engels: *Selected Works*. Vol. 2, p. 188.

all may become 'bureaucrats' for a time and that, therefore, *nobody* may be able to become a 'bureaucrat'."¹⁰⁷

Elsewhere in his work: *The State and Revolution* he augments the above two proposals how to combat bureaucratization by suggesting to replace the parliamentary bodies with "workers' bodies," i.e. organs which have both legislative and executive functions.¹⁰⁸

In the course of socialist construction, efforts have been made to implement these principles. Of course, they always had to be adapted to the concrete circumstances. In the period immediately after the Socialist Revolution, Lenin and the leadership of the RCP(B) would emphatically voice the pre-revolutionary demand for the revolutionary vanguard to raise able rank-and-file people to managerial positions. For instance, in June 1918 he called for: "appointing hundreds and thousands of completely reliable workers to responsible administration posts, workers who understand that they are not working in their local cause but in the cause of the whole of Russia, who are capable of sticking at their posts as representatives of the whole class, of organising the work according to a definite and systematic plan, of carrying out orders."¹⁰⁹

Lenin held it imperative for the socialist vanguard to consistently train and appoint to responsible posts people of working class origin.¹¹⁰

For this reason he proposed to oblige the Party, the state bodies and the trade unions to keep a registration of workers whom they consider suitable for occupying responsible jobs. They should be tried, he said, and if found to be able, promoted to increasingly demanding positions.¹¹¹

In his draft for the theses: *On the Role and Tasks of the Trade Unions under the Circumstances of the New Economic Policy*, he described it as a cardinal task to replace the incompetent high officers with more able men, and to transfer them elsewhere.¹¹²

¹⁰⁷ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 25, p. 481.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. p. 487. For the description of the success of the efforts to keep the salary of the administrative workers on the same level as that of the average worker under socialism, see my work: *A szocialista állam és kritikussai* (Socialist state and its critics), Budapest, 1966, pp. 123—128 and pp. 141—145.

¹⁰⁹ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 27, p. 489. See the same idea also: *ibid.* p. 213, pp. 262—263. Vol. 26, pp. 469—470. Vol. 30, p. 247.

¹¹⁰ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 30, p. 311. See also the documents of the discussion of trade unions of 1920—1921.

¹¹¹ Ibid. pp. 297—298.

¹¹² Ленинский Сборник, Vol. 36, p. 389.

Lenin and the rest of the leaders of the RCP(B) would resolutely demand the removal from the leading posts of those elements who were unable to be worthy representatives of socialist leadership. Once it is established that a man in a responsible job is no longer able to discharge his task in a communist way, he has to be relieved of the post despite all his merits. Such considerations must have motivated Lenin, when in February 1922, he laid down the following principles: "Distrust of decrees, of institutions, of 'reorganization' and of grandees, especially among Communists; struggle against the mire of bureaucracy and red tape by checking up on people and on the actual work done; merciless expulsion of unnecessary officials, reduction of staff, replacement of Communists who do not study the art of management seriously—such must be the line of the People's Commissars and the Council of People's Commissars, of its Chairman and his Deputy Chairmen."¹¹³

In order to enable the working masses to safeguard themselves against the possible mistakes of their leaders and to prevent these shortcomings, the communist movement has espoused all of Lenin's relevant proposals. This is reflected, among others, in the Programme of the Communist International, adopted at its Sixth Congress in 1928. It is said, among others, in the document that the continuous enlisting of the masses to socialist construction, the unbroken refreshment of the entire state, economic, trade union and Party machinery with workers from the ranks of the proletariat, the recruitment of a new cadre for all the sections of socialist construction from the workers in general and the working youth in particular—all this is to safeguard the proletariat from the bureaucratic fossilization and social distortion of the ruling cadre.¹¹⁴

Both the Party and Lenin felt it necessary to emphasize that the raising of workers to leading posts by the Party and state organs and other organizations can never become an autotelic activity. The most basic aim of such measures must be an improved quality of production. Addressing the Third Congress of Water Transport Workers in March 1920 Lenin said that: "You know from the debates in the Central Committee that we are not opposed to placing workers at the head but we say that this question must be settled in the interests of production. No devotion, no

¹¹³ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 35, p. 542.

¹¹⁴ Стенографический отчёт шестого конгресса Коминтерна, (Stenographic Protocol of the Sixth Congress of the Communist International) Moscow—Leningrad, 1929, p. 142.

self-sacrifice can save us if we do not keep the workers alive, . . . if we do not succeed in procuring large quantities of salt, so as to recompense the peasants by properly organised exchange and not with pieces of coloured paper. . . . With management in the hands of incompetent people. . . . the very existence of Soviet Russia is at stake. . . . So tackle the question of management like practical men. See to it that management is conducted with the minimum expenditure of forces; see to it that the administrators, whether experts or workers, are capable men, that they all work and manage, and let it be considered a crime from them not to take part in the work of the management."¹¹⁵

What is the underlying meaning of the above Marxist principles, and of the policy of the Communist Party as practised following the Socialist Revolution?

These principles and the practice of Party were not only confined to the service of the topical and urgent objective of supplying the victorious working class—which badly needed an army of leaders for the management of affairs in its own interests—with capable men.

That the leaders were elected and they could be called to account and recalled by the people, as well as, the ever more intensive enlisting of the workers to the administration of public affairs were meant to serve also *other purposes*. First, that the men in responsible posts should always be aware that they work under the eyes, under the control of the workers. Second, that they should never forget that, if they are unable to discharge properly their duties, the workers have the power to recall them because they are replaceable. There are always many talented people among the workers who—having been enlisted to the management of public affairs and having acquired the necessary expertise—may at any time step into their place. If the socialist vanguard consciously strives to locate these talented men, and to train them, in the first place, by drawing them into the practical work of administration (and ensuring a complementary theoretical education); if it always assures scope for popular action, an alternative echelon of management will be called into being. It is a sort of a back-up “cast,” which may replace the “first cast” if necessary, and *from which the first echelon can always be replenished*.

Institutionalized safeguards were deployed to protect the masses and the cause of socialism from the bureaucratization of individual leaders and units of management. The public-spirited masses were given the

¹¹⁵ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 30, pp. 428—429.

opportunity to control the work of the leaders. An "insecure" situation was created for the men in responsible posts. The people got the right to recall and replace them with other capable men. Thus the leaders' class-consciousness, good faith and goodwill have ceased to be the only guarantees of effective management.

In the early years of the Soviet state the high state, economic and, what is more, military, posts were elective, and the electorate had the right of recall. Starting with the military posts, this practice was gradually terminated. The elective principle has survived only in the representative posts. As a rule, people's control has become indirect. The evaluation of the activity of the men in charge has become the task of the mass organizations, the Party, the trade unions, other organs or their officers. They have tackled to propose the leaders' promotion or demotion. (This practice applies also to the present.)

Such a development of affairs has been the result, in the first place, of the fact that the men elevated to managerial posts proved to be capable of fulfilling their duties. Therefore, their transfer would have been detrimental to the common good. Another factor has been the fact that both in the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries petty-bourgeois strata accounted for the preponderant majority of the population. Should every leading post be elective, such an electorate would have chosen self-seeking men for the offices, instead of the consistent advocates of socialist transformation.¹¹⁶

Another important cause was the real threat of a capitalist restoration and an imperialist intervention, which necessitated a stepped-up pace of the socialist transformation, industrialization and collectivization of agriculture. Under such circumstances, it became necessary to loosen the dependence of the power organs and their officials on the working masses, which favoured a slower pace of development.

It had grave consequences that the right of the masses had been

¹¹⁶ To illustrate the seriousness of such a danger, let us refer to the composition of rural Soviets in Soviet Russia between the Socialist Revolution and the summer of 1918—a relatively calm spell on the home scene. Until mid-1918 the delegates of the well-to-do peasantry accounted for the majority in these organs of state authority. For this very reason it became necessary to set up poor peasants' committees, and reorganize these Soviets relying upon them. It all happened by no means incidentally: soon after that the Whites in exile adopted the slogan: "We want Soviets without communists." The slogan was also adopted by the participants of the counter-revolutionary mutiny in Kronstadt.

sharply abridged to control and, if necessary, recall their leaders. The managerial personnel's status was unduly stabilized, the leaders turned a deaf ear to all initiatives from below which implied disadvantage for them. As early as 1928, even before the cult of personality got deep-rooted, Stalin took notice of these phenomena and their possible harmful effects. In 1927 a campaign of self-criticism was launched in the Soviet Union. Speaking in the initial stage of the drive, Stalin thus explained the need for self-criticism: "A peculiar sort of relation has lately begun to arise between the leaders and the masses. On the one hand there was formed, there came into being historically, a group of leaders among us whose prestige is rising and rising and who are becoming almost unapproachable for the masses. On the other hand the working-class masses in the first place, and the masses of the working people in general are rising extremely slowly, are beginning to look up at the leaders from below with blinking eyes, and not infrequently are afraid to criticise them... But the fact... cannot but give rise to a certain danger of the leaders losing contact with the masses and the masses getting out of touch with the leaders. This danger may result in the leaders becoming conceited and regarding themselves as infallible... Clearly, nothing can come of this but the ruin of the Party."¹¹⁷

As we can see from this passage, early in 1928 Stalin was as yet fully aware of the danger of the leaders' losing contact with the masses and regarding themselves infallible. He even felt himself in the position to offer a piece of advice on how to overcome this danger: "Precisely in order that we may move forward and improve that relations between the masses and the leaders, we must keep the valve of self-criticism open all the time, we must make it possible for Soviet people to 'go for' their leaders, to criticize their mistakes, so that the leaders may not grow conceited, and the masses may not get out of touch with the leaders."¹¹⁸

In the ensuing era of personality cult these correct guidelines fell into oblivion. Political practice took quite another course. All non-representative functions lost their elective character. And understandably so: in order to have its subjectivistic policies put into practice, the central leadership had to create a state, political, economic and cultural machinery which stucked to it with an implicit obedience. Therefore, all the leading posts were filled by appointments from above. A strict official

¹¹⁷ J. V. Stalin: *Works*. Vol. 11, Moscow, 1954, p. 34.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.* p. 35.

discipline was enforced. The institutions assumed a rigid hierarchical arrangement.

The struggle to liquidate the effects of the personality cult has involved a continual revision of the relationship of the leaders and the governed.

During the present, more advanced phase of socialism the circumstances are especially favourable for that. *First*, because the interests of the diverse classes and strata of the working people increasingly coalesce. *Second*, because the socialist consciousness of the working masses has heavily strengthened. And *third*, because the cultural and educational development of the workers have considerably risen. As a consequence, quite a few workers are underemployed, i.e., they are utilized at less skilled tasks than their training permit. Should these people be drawn, in the form of unpaid work, into the planning, control and management of public affairs, their skills and abilities could be fully utilized. Thereby the incumbent leadership would get expert popular assistance. On the other hand, having acquired many practical experiences, these rank-and-file "assistants" could lighten management. By helping the men in high or low responsible posts to elaborate alternative solutions and proposals, and by participating in the expert evaluation of the activities of the operating organizations, they would bring about a healthy contest to reach better production outputs.

Since actual historical development took the above-described course, the objective circumstances have ceased to exist which earlier all but necessitated the shelving of the leaders' electiveness, their subordination to the masses and the replenishment of their echelons from the rank and file.

In light of the new circumstances, the question became topical whether to return to the earlier Marxist principle and practice of the relationship of the leaders and the governed. This can be seen in the Programme of CPSU, adopted at its Twenty-second Congress in 1961. It was laid down in the Programme that the elective principle has to be gradually extended to all the leading posts in the state organs. Efforts have to be made to reduce the number of the full-time administrative personnel of the state. Ever larger masses have to be enlisted to the work of administration; and, in the long run, administrative work as such should cease to be a self-contained profession.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁹ *Az SZKP XXII. kongresszusának jegyzőkönyve* (Protocol of the Twenty-second Congress of the CPSU), Budapest, 1962, p. 801.

The problem was approached from another angle in the Tenth Congress of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party. It was said during the Congress that it should become the task of the conscious socialist forces and the whole structure of management to train those people who will in time become able to replace the leaders. In other words, to train a "second cast" of management.

At the congress it was declared: that leader works efficiently who is surrounded by equally capable leaders-in-the-training. The work of those leaders is efficient who bring about the necessary conditions for their own replacement with others. Managerial art has become so involved that is no longer enough to appoint just one deputy. Every leader should arrange his affairs in such a way that work must be done smoothly even without him. Production output must not be dependent in any field of socialist construction upon the promotion or demotion of a leader.¹²⁰

The teachings of Marx and Lenin of the electiveness of the leaders, their responsibility to the masses, and on the enlistment of the workers to the management of public affairs, as well as, the consistent implementation of these principles—in the course of which the concrete analysis of the concrete situation comes first—have been adequate safeguards for socialist society to prevent its leading bodies and officers from losing contact with the masses, i.e., to ward off their bureaucratization. Thus socialist management has been able to discharge its duties effectively.

6.4. The Democratic Centralism of the Socialist Power System

Palmiro Togliatti has given the following characterization of the democratic centralism within the power system of socialist democracy. The basis of it is a simple and new-type relationship of the citizens, the Party and the state. Both the Party and the state maintain basic units in the work places. They constitute the foundation of both the Soviet organs and organizations of the Communist Party. It is the task of the Party, the vanguard of the working class, to direct the economic, administrative, etc. activities of the state. The leading function of the Party originates in the fact that it plays a leading role in the Soviet organizations and mass organizations, and that it is the Party which elaborates the main course

¹²⁰ *Az MSZMP X. kongresszusának jegyzőkönyve* (Protocol of the Tenth Congress of the HSWP), Budapest, 1971, p. 234.

of the development of the society and struggles for the realization of its plans. The resultant system of democratic centralism is the system of proletarian dictatorship. In it leadership and consensus are inseparably one.¹²¹

What power system facilitates best the assertion of the will of the people, of democracy? Political scientists and the activists of the working-class movement have for long strived to answer this question.

Many hold the view even today that the ideal basic unit of democracy is the local residential or production unit.

It will be recalled that Spinoza, the classic writers of the Enlightenment, Montesquieu and Rousseau were of the view that democracy can be realized only in societies which are not larger than the ancient Greek city states. As far as the working-class movement is concerned, the critics of centralism have included Proudhon, Bakunin and Kropotkin and their followers the present-day anarchists. They favour the "decentralization" of democracy. This tenet has also been espoused by the revisionists. The *locus classicus* of the revisionist approach to centralism can be found in Proudhon's *oeuvre*. Centralism—Proudhon wrote—is by the strength of its theory an obstacle to liberty. The colossal power of the state, acquired through centralization, precludes all the initiatives, all the spontaneous and independent actions of the individual or group. Centralization empowers the state to manage, to control or to prevent whatever it wants without ever encountering any effective opposition.¹²²

The present stage of social evolution has rendered these views outdated. *First*, because the spread of large-scale production and commerce have reduced the significance of small communities. *Second*, the development of the division of labour has also undercut the importance of small communities. It is self-evident, for instance, that the technical expertise cannot be utilized in an optimum way except in major communities where production is done on a large scale. *Third*, because only a centralized organization of power can effectively meet the growing educational, cultural, social welfare, and health requirements. The discharge of these tasks needs an authority over large parts of the country, in fact, the entire country. *Fourth*, only through the centralization of the state is it possible

¹²¹ P. Togliatti: "Le decisioni del ventesimo Congresso e il Partito Comunista Italiano" *Rinascita*, October 1958, p. 613.

¹²² Proudhon: *OEuvres Complètes*. Vol. 3, Paris, 1924, p. 403.

to live up to the defence commitments of the country in such a split world. The requirements of international economic relations and the integration processes within the individual economic systems, and the demands arising from the heterogeneous defense obligations of various societies, also call for centralization. In light of these reasons, the economic, political and cultural set-up of a modern society must be centralized.

Already the early works of the classics of Marxism attest to the realization of this fact. In his speech on February 8, 1845 at the town of Elberfeld, Engels declared that a communist organization of the state will have the advantage of: "the fusing of the individual powers into social collective power and in the kind of organisation which is based on this concentration of powers hitherto opposed to one another."¹²³ In the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* Marx and Engels call for the centralization of: "all instruments of production on the hands of the State, i.e., of the proletariat organised as the ruling class; and to increase the total of productive forces as rapidly as possible".¹²⁴ Contributing to this issue after the Socialist Revolution, Lenin took this principle as his point of departure. He wrote in his comments on the draft for the *Regulations for the Management of the Nationalised Enterprises*: "Communism requires and presupposes the greatest possible centralisation of large-scale production throughout the country. The all-Russia centre, therefore, should definitely be given the right of direct control over all the enterprises of the given branch of industry. The regional centres define their functions depending on local conditions of life, etc., in accordance with the general production directions and decisions of the centre."¹²⁵

Wherever they touched upon this issue, Marx and Engels took a stand in favour of a unified and indivisible republic, and the centralized power of the working class.

Lenin fully agreed with them on this point. This is how he commented on the issue in his article: *Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?*, which was written immediately before the Socialist Revolution: "We are in favour of centralism and of a 'plan', but of the centralism and plan of the *proletarian* state, of proletarian regulation of production and dis-

¹²³ K. Marx and F. Engels: *Collected Works*. Vol. 4, Moscow, 1975, p. 252.

¹²⁴ K. Marx and F. Engels: *Collected Works*. Vol. 6, p. 504.

¹²⁵ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 42, p. 96.

tribution in the interests of the poor, the working people, the exploited against the exploiters."¹²⁶

Following the victory of the Socialist Revolution, Lenin came out against provincialism, local patriotism and the attempts here and there to obstruct the effective managing activity of the centre. As he put it: "the local bodies must get accustomed to the idea that we have to compel them to carry out the policy of the central authorities consistently. That is very difficult and it is natural that many millions of people, who are accustomed to looking on the central authorities as robbers, landowners, exploiters, can have no trust in the centre. But this distrust must be overcome. Socialism cannot be built if it is not, for that means building a centralised economic system, an economic system directed from the centre."¹²⁷

In his "*Left-Wing*" *Communism—An Infantile Disorder*, written nearly two and a half years after the victory of the October Revolution, Lenin described it as one of the cardinal lessons of the recent period that: "absolute centralisation and rigorous discipline in the proletariat are an essential condition of victory over the bourgeoisie".¹²⁸

Marx, Engels and Lenin denounced the tenet championed by petty-bourgeois and anarchist theorists under which the centralization of the socio-political constitution of the state runs contrary to the free exercise of democracy and, therefore, has to be replaced by a decentralized system. They proved it eloquently that it is a centralized organization of the state which can assure the most favourable conditions for the forward development of democracy and the assertion of the will of the people.

In their *Message to the Central Authority of the League of Communists*, written in 1850, Marx and Engels warned that in a revolution to come the politicians advocating a petty-bourgeois democracy would strive to establish a federative republic. And if, despite their efforts, a unitary republic comes into being, they will seek the formation of a government in which the work of the central authorities would be obstructed by the maximum independence of the local authorities. As they put it: "The workers, in opposition to this plan, must not only strive for a single and indivisible German republic, but also within this republic for the most determined centralisation of power in the hands of the state authority.

¹²⁶ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 26, p. 118.

¹²⁷ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 28, p. 400.

¹²⁸ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 31, p. 24.

They must not allow themselves to be misguided by the democratic talk of freedom for the communities, of self-government, etc."

Though they were speaking of Germany, the truth of their words applies universally. (The same can be told of Marx's later work on the Paris Commune or Engels' *Critique of the Social-Democratic Draft Programme of 1891*.) Also in their "Address to the League", Marx and Engels defended centralism in the following passage: "it must under no circumstances be permitted that every village, every town and every province should put a new obstacle in the path of revolutionary activity, which can proceed with full force only from the centre".¹²⁹

On the basis of Marx's writings on the Paris Commune, Lenin concluded that "Marx was a centralist", who systematically strived "to oppose conscious, democratic, proletarian centralism to bourgeois, military, bureaucratic centralism".¹³⁰

Commenting on Engels' *Critique of the Social-Democratic Draft Programme of 1891*, Lenin wrote: "Engels, armed with facts, disproved... the prejudice which is very widespread, particularly among petty-bourgeois democrats, that a federal republic necessarily means a greater amount of freedom than a centralised republic. This is wrong... The really democratic centralised republic gave *more freedom* than the federative republic. In other words, the *greatest* amount of local, regional and other freedom known in history was accorded by a *centralised* and not a federal republic."¹³¹

As it is widely known, centralism was in a high esteem also to such outstanding representatives of the Second International as Bernstein and Kautsky. Yet they considered it to be attainable only by the old exploiting and bureaucratic state. Therefore, they opposed the break of this state, which they regarded as the embodiment of a centralism of a "positive character". Lenin repeatedly criticized their views in, among others, his work: *State and Revolution*. He pointed out that it was inconceivable for Kautsky and Bernstein that the proletarian communes voluntarily unite to overthrow bourgeois power and to break the bourgeois state machinery. For Bernstein and Kautsky centralism is acceptable only when it is created from above through the efforts of the bureaucracy and the army. But Lenin challenged their views with the following question: "Now if the

¹²⁹ K. Marx and F. Engels: *Collected Works*. Vol. 10, p. 285.

¹³⁰ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 25, pp. 429—431.

¹³¹ *Ibid.* p. 448.

proletariat and the poor peasants take state power into their own hands, organise themselves quite freely in communes, and *unite* the action of all the communes in striking at capital, in crushing the resistance of the capitalists, and in transferring the privately-owned railways, factories, land and so on the *entire* nation, to the whole of society, will not that be centralism? Will not that be the most consistent democratic centralism and, moreover, proletarian centralism?" Elsewhere in this work he continues: "Centralism is possible with both the old and the new state machine. If the workers voluntarily unite their armed forces, this will be centralism, but it will be based on the 'complete destruction' of the centralised state apparatus—the standing army, the police and the bureaucracy."¹³²

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Explicating the stand of Marxism on democratic centralism, Lenin wrote: "Engels' idea of centralism did not in the least preclude such broad local self-government as would combine the voluntary defence of the unity of the state by the 'communes' and districts, and the complete elimination of all bureaucratic practices and all 'ordering' from above."¹³³ Following the Great October Socialist Revolution Lenin elaborated the question in the following way: "Stereotyped forms and uniformity imposed from above have nothing in common with democratic and socialist centralism. The unity of essentials, of fundamentals, of the substance, is not disturbed but ensured by *variety* in details, in specific local features, in methods of *approach*, in *methods* of exercising control..."¹³⁴ Lenin returned to the issue in January 1918 in his draft for the article: *The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government*. Discussing the relationship of democratic centralism and autonomy, he pointed out that they do not exclude, instead, mutually suppose each other. "Democratic centralism... in no way excludes, but on the contrary, presupposes the fullest freedom of various localities and even of various communes of the state in developing multifarious forms of state, social and economic life... Local distinctions, specific economic formations, forms of everyday life, the degree of preparedness of the population, attempts to carry out a particular plan—all these are bound to be reflected in the specific features of the path to socialism of a particular

¹³² Ibid. pp. 429—431 and p. 485.

¹³³ Ibid. p. 447.

¹³⁴ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 26, p. 413.

labour commune of the state. The greater such diversity—provided, of course, that it does not turn into eccentricity—the more surely and rapidly shall we ensure the achievements of both democratic centralism and a socialist economy.”¹³⁵

Lenin held it imperative to always abide by the central directives, decrees and the laws with a due consideration of the local circumstances.¹³⁶ He always strived to ensure the local organs a great deal of latitude so as to enable them to find new and adequate forms of solving the problems.¹³⁷

The socialist form of government arranged in the system of democratic centralism assures a far-reaching autonomy and an almost unlimited leeway for the regional, local and work place communities over those issues which have no substantial bearing on the interests of other communities or the entire society. Thus decision-making and the implementation of the decisions can be done in a democratic way. Responsibility is given in the hands of (a) those who know the problems well; (b) are the most interested in their optimum solution (c) and are capable of checking up on the realization of the decisions effectively. In other words, free scope is assured for the activity of the millions of workers in their place of residence and work.¹³⁸

It should be noted, however, that democratic centralism does not grant full sovereignty for the lower level organs. *First*, their scope of authority is determined by the socialist power centre with regard to the framework, form and mode of their activity. *Second*, their activity must be focused on the local assertion of the socialist interests of the whole society. *Third*, their elbow room must not encroach on the fundamental interests of the remaining socialist communities.

The system of democratic centralism is incompatible with a fully decentralized power pattern where the socialist centre would play only a token role. For this reason the development of the local communities

¹³⁵ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 27, pp. 207—208.

¹³⁶ See, for instance, V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 26, p. 285 and p. 286; Vol. 29, p. 158; Vol. 30, p. 190.

¹³⁷ Cf. Sándor Zsarnóczai ed.: *A demokratikus centralizmusról* (On democratic centralism), Budapest, 1972. The work includes several noteworthy reflection on democratic centralism, though some of them should be elucidated in further discussions.

¹³⁸ Several until now not delimited functions have been delimited in recent years in the Hungarian People's Republic in the field of public, economic and cultural administration. It was accompanied by a devolution of authority, thereby democratic centralism and democracy in general were broadened.

runs *parallel with* the maintenance of a centralized system of government. The socialist power centre (a) defines the general objectives of society; (b) carries out an overall and effective management of the country's affairs also by issuing adequate guidelines; (c) coordinates the various local-level activities; (d) reconciles conflicting interests; (e) carries out a general supervision over the assertion of the common interests of the entire socialist society and over the observance of the rules of living in peace with each other and of socialist legality.

Socialist people's power as exercised in the system of democratic centralism does not mean a unilateral relation only, i.e., the obligation of lower bodies to the higher ones, and obedience and subordination of the higher ones to the central authorities.

Under the principle of socialist democracy election is effected from below. This means that the delegates and the higher units are elected by the rank and file and the lower bodies. Consequently, the officers and the higher units are accountable by the lower bodies for their activity. In order to further develop socialist democracy, it is imperative to elaborate and develop the interdependence of *every* unit within the unitary system of the management of democratic centralism *inter-dependent*. They should be rendered accountable for not only their own activity, but also for *one another's*. For the accomplishment of that aim the lower units of the socialist community should not only display initiative and creativeness but should also strive to fulfil the directives of the higher bodies precisely, effectively and in disciplined way. Further, the lower units should feel as their duty to take several other steps. They should seek the ways and means how to convey the workers' opinions and wishes to those above regularly and not only occasionally, and especially when it comes to the election of delegates. They should make efforts to provide the rank-and-file additional possibilities for influencing the mass media as well as the top-level bodies of the economy. They should be busy to find it out how to make the higher organs better realize their responsibility to the lower units and the rank and file. They should also strive to find out how to better subordinate the higher units to the will of the workers.

What is the significance of democratic centralism from the viewpoint of democracy?

First, only this system may enable the working masses, the local, regional and work place communities to assert their democratic decisions. It is so because in this system the officers and the higher units are elected

from below. Also, under the principle of democratic centralism the decisions of the rank and file are binding on the officers they elected, in fact, on each officer above them. At the Tenth Congress of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, the opinion was voiced that the spirit of democratic centralism entails that not only the central resolutions and decisions should fall under the category of centralism, but also those of the local Party organizations and primary branch organizations of the Party, as well as, the joint decisions of the leading members of local state and social organs. In this way, the system of democratic centralism ensures a unified and coherent system of management within the Party, which is part and parcel of the entire activity and initiative of the local organs, i.e., of the democratic character of political activity.¹³⁹

Second, the system of democratic centralism guarantees the assertion of the local positive socialist initiatives. This system prevents the local non-socialist forces from suppressing these initiatives. Further, under this system they can have an influence on the whole of the socialist society, instead of being confined to remain within the limits of the given locality. It can be said therefore that the system of democratic centralism opens wide vistas for rank and file activity.

Third, the pattern of power as arranged along the lines of democratic centralism is instrumental in precluding anti-socialist tendencies from gaining ascendancy in any local or work place community, let alone in larger units. We must refer at this point to an argument of Lenin's on the dangers of local influence, written in connection with the argument brought up against—the "dual subordination" of procurators. "Undoubtedly, we are living amidst an ocean of illegality," he wrote reflecting on the conditions of Soviet Russia in 1922. "And local influence is one of the greatest, if not the greatest obstacles to the establishment of law and culture."¹⁴⁰ True, now half a century later, the present situation is radically different from the one described by Lenin. Yet concrete events have proved that relatively often the socialist principles or legality are being violated for a relatively long period on local levels without calling to account the offenders. Its reason is that the local relation of forces, occasionally the very abuse of power by the local leaders, are obstacles to the exposure and combatting of these instances of malversation. Therefore, only the decisions of principle, the jurisdiction of control exercised

¹³⁹ *Protocol of the Tenth Congress of the HSWP*, (in Hungarian), p. 232.

¹⁴⁰ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 33, p. 365.

by higher organs and the capacity of these organs for operational interference on the basis of democratic centralism become the means and guarantee for eliminating and avoiding these mistakes and abuses.

6.5. The Leading and Exemplary Role of the Communist Party

The Marxist-Leninist Party plays a leading role in the life of the society under socialism. This is what Lenin said of the question in several of his writings: "in law and practice, the Constitution of the Soviet Republic is based on the tenet that the Party rectifies, prescribes and builds according to a single principle".¹⁴¹ "The Party is the leader, the vanguard of the proletariat, which rules directly."¹⁴² "The dictatorship of the proletariat would not work except through the Communist Party."¹⁴³ Being the chief instrument of the socialist exercise of power, "the Party has consciously set out to help the proletariat perform its function of educator, organiser and leader, without which the collapse of capitalism is impossible".¹⁴⁴

The Marxist-Leninist Party is a specific organization which discharges especially complex tasks in socialist society. It is simultaneously an organic part of people's government and a popular organization. It is the party in power and is, at the same time, the most conscious socialist critical force. It represents the interests of the whole society, but is, at the same time, the means for the effective assertion of righteous specific interests. It is the organic part, motor and leading force of the system of horizontal and vertical safeguards facilitating the normal operation of the socialist system.¹⁴⁵

The leading role of the Marxist-Leninist Party must not be based solely on the traditions. It is insufficient to refer to the past when it spearheaded the fight for socialist power, or to invoke its recent successes in managing the construction of socialism. Past merits necessarily fall into oblivion if the Party is unable to prove with its day-to-day adequate work that it is entitled to the leading role *even today*. The leading role of the Party is in part the result of the fact that definite social tasks can be

¹⁴¹ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 31, p. 367.

¹⁴² V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 32, p. 98.

¹⁴³ Ibid. p. 199.

¹⁴⁴ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 31, p. 367.

¹⁴⁵ The issue is given a more detailed discussion in Chapter 7 of the author's *The "New Class"—Phantasy or? Realit* (in Hungarian)

discharged by nobody except the Party, the vanguard of the people. At the same time, the effectiveness of this leading role depends at all times on the efficiency of the Party in discharging its tasks.

First, under socialism the Party is not simply one of the leading organizations. It is the most important leading body on every level of management owing to its character, theory, composition and organization. Second, the Party is not simply the organization in charge of individual fields. Being the supreme representative of the working masses, it has an overall leading role. Third, the Party does not direct the activities in the diverse fields of social life directly. As a rule, it discharges the leading role indirectly: through the respective leading organs, the communists working there and the organizations of these communists. Fourth, the Party is not confined to being a specific general staff of the working class. It is also an organization which rallies the rank-and-file promoters of the socialist-communist transformation. Fifth, the Party makes many-sided efforts to eliminate the division of labour between the leaders and the governed. On the one hand, it strives perspectively to eliminate that division of labour through the results of its activity. On the other hand, at least in the field on political leadership, it actually eliminates that division of labour by rallying the great mass of its members for the management of society.

If the Party asserts the Marxist-Leninist principles consistently, it is a paragon of discharging the dual task of every socialist management. *On the one hand*, it serves the social interests with a high-level management, *on the other*, it facilitates the elimination of the differences between the leaders and the governed by enlisting the broad masses to the management of public affairs.

6.5.1. The Leading Role of the Party and Democracy

The Marxist-Leninist Party is the supreme instrument of the realization, formulation and assertion of the will and interests of the working masses. The social leading role of this organization creates favourable conditions for the people to put into practice its will and realize its interests. The leading role of the Party is therefore the fundamental condition and assurance of *genuine* democracy and of the *socialist* character of democracy.

For this reason the enemies of socialism and socialist democracy have been busy attempting to undermine and do away with the leading role

of the Party. Their attack takes the form of discovering an "antinomy" between the Party's leading role and democracy.

Both the enemies of the Party and politically uneducated individuals interpret the Party's leading role as a monopoly of power. Thus they consider it a violation of democracy and democratic equality.

In so far as this interpretation postulates the power of the Party, it is groundless. It is the working people and not the Party which possesses real power under socialism.¹⁴⁶

It is true, however that, because of the leading role of the Party, the diverse organizations and movements within socialist society cannot and are not equal. The differences in the character, interests and level of consciousness of the diverse social groups survive also in the socialist society. As a consequence, the organizations representing their interests do not stand on the same level of theoretical preparedness and organization. They also vary in their commitment to the programme of Marxian socialism. Let us mention here that in some socialist countries petty-bourgeois parties also participate in the political life. Though they do not stand on a Marxist platform, they support the programme of the Communist Party of their country.

Under these circumstances, if all associations were given equal rights, the sway of the organizations of the masses which represent a lower level of socialist consciousness and organization (and which in numerous socialist countries still account for the majority of the population) would inevitably grow to the detriment of the more advanced and consistent socialist forces. The dwindling of the influence of the latter organizations, including the Party, evidently runs counter to the fundamental interests of socialism and of the workers.

Therefore, the genuine interests of the masses of people are served best by that very political arrangement in which the socialist organizations that represent their will and demands as consciously as it is possible, may have a stronger influence on the public issues than the rest of them. The leading role should be therefore ensured for that organization which is able the best to assert the requirements of socialism and communism. The basis of the inequality of organizations is therefore not the monopoly of the Party. Instead, it is their objectively measurable performance: *the scope of authority and role of the individual organizations must be dependent on their efficacy in serving the people*. Under socialism, the better an

¹⁴⁶ For more details, see *ibid.* Chapters 4 and 6.

association can meet this requirement, the greater role it should get. The assertion of this requirement is a touchstone of every real democracy. In socialist society the leading role is ensured for the Party because it is the Party which can assert the interests of the people the best.

The critics of the leading role of the Party also allege that it results in a sort of dyarchy within the democratic exercise of power, which hinders the proper functioning and responsible decision-making of the remaining democratic organizations. For this reason they demand the curtailment of the sway of the Party, which permeates and directs all activities. They demand to put an end to Party interference, which they describe as "unwarranted and illegal".

True, there was a period, especially when the masses were as yet much less active than nowadays, when it was imperative for the Party to interfere directly in matters of operative affairs of the exercise of power. Even after that, there have been several instances when the relevant Party organs ignore the increased activity of the workers and follow the old-fashioned method of taking the administration of the affairs in their own hands. They do not realize that there is no need for that any more. This direct interference obstructs the efforts of the relevant organs to discharge their tasks on their own. What is more, it makes it more difficult to enlist the masses to the management of public affairs. It slows down the unfoldment of popular initiative and activity.

Whenever the Party interfered unnecessarily and took the the day-to-day administration of petty affairs of government, production or culture out of the hands of the relevant organs, it paid a heavy cost for that. *First*, because it found itself faced with many such tasks which diverted its interest from the major social issues or, at least, it made decision-making more difficult. *Second*, because the Party is no more a purely political organization if it tackles the administration of such a multitude of affairs. *Third*, such an activity undermines and distorts the leading role of the Party. It is unworthy of the Party to resort to pressure for obtaining decisions favourable for this or that individual; or to attempt to cover up the mistakes of this or that organ; or to tackle to become a "shield" between ineffective organizations and the masses which are dissatisfied with their performance.

It is laid down in the Resolution of the Eleventh Congress of the RCP(B) that the lack of a strict delimitation of functions and unwarrantable interference brings about a situation in which in the Party organizations themselves no one takes serious and definite responsibility

for the affair he is charged with. That increases bureaucracy, obstructs the real specialization of officials in economic posts, and hinders the thorough and detailed analysis of the problems and the gaining of real practical experiences. In one word, it is an obstruction to the adequate organization of labour.¹⁴⁷

Hence it is clear that the *direct* exercise of power has been for the Marxist-Leninist Party a "temptation" rather strong to be resisted. It is declared, for instance, in the Programme of Eighth Congress of the Party that on no account should the functions of the Party collectives be confused with those of the state organs and Soviets. That would bring about fatal consequences. The Party has to see to the implementation of its resolutions through the Soviets *within the framework of the Constitution of the Soviet Union*. The Party has been striving to *guide* the activities of the Soviets and not to substitute them. This resolution was confirmed by the Eleventh Congress of the RCP(B).¹⁴⁸ The Congress augmented it with provisions concerning the economic organizations. The Party organizations must by no means interfere in the daily work of the economic units—the Eleventh Congress resolved—and they should strive to abstain from interfering in the administrative work of the Soviets. It is the duty of the Party organizations to direct the activity of the economic units, yet under no circumstance should they attempt to replace them or strip them of their distinctive character.¹⁴⁹

In a letter written prior to the Eleventh Congress of the Party, Lenin raised the issue of separating the functions of the Party from those of the government, the economic and other organizations. "It is necessary to delimit much more precisely the functions of the Party (and of its Central Committee) from those of the Soviet government; to increase the responsibility and independence of Soviet officials and of Soviet government institutions, leaving to the Party the general guidance of the activities of all state bodies, without the present, too frequent, irregular and often petty interference."¹⁵⁰

The authors of the above documents called for the abolishment of an uncalled-for parallel organization and administration of the fulfilment of diverse non-political tasks by way of delimiting the functions. They

¹⁴⁷ Resolutions of the CPSU (in Hungarian), Vol. 1, p. 732.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid. p. 519 and p. 732.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid. p. 732.

¹⁵⁰ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 33, p. 253.

were interested in improving the quality of labour. But the enemies of the leading role of the Party are not interested in resolving problems related to work methods. When fighting the "superfluous" and "unwarranted" duality of administration, they, in fact, challenge the *ubiquitous* and *general* guidance carried out by the Party.

The question to be answered at this point is whether it is necessary to eliminate *all sorts of* overlap of the functions of the Party and the remaining organs of administration. Whether it is necessary and useful to "simplify" the political constitution of socialist democracy in such a way that there would be just one and single administrator, supervisor and controller of each field. Before answering this question, we have to solve a theoretical problem of another type.

Analysing the bourgeois and revisionist views on the question, the first thing which strikes our eye is a self-contradiction: the bourgeois and revisionist critics describe the socialist system as "monolithic". The remedy, they allege, lies in "pluralism", which for most of them is equivalent with a multi-party system. Without even attempting to go into a detailed introduction of their views, it can be inferred that they advocate the necessity of a multiple control over the individual fields of social life. But whenever the supervision and evaluation of affairs by the Party is at issue, they clamour for "the eradication of parallel control".

On the other hand—and this aspect is even more important—the bourgeois and revisionist theorists ignore scientifically established facts about the relationship of the political parties and society. Let us quote here the words of A. Gramsci. In his opinion in civilized society, in the life of each group the role of political parties is identical with that of the state itself. The success of the fulfilment of this role depends on how efficiently the party can develop the elements of the social group which provides its social basis, and whose birth can be traced back to economic factors. The goal of the party is to train its members to become capable political intellectuals, leaders and organizers, who can tackle any function which they are required to discharge in a fully civilized and politicized society.¹⁵¹ In addition to representing the interests of their own class, the parties therefore also strive to train their own specialists, whom they empower to supervise the various fields of social life and to formulate and assert the relevant party line there. The whole body of a party's professional

¹⁵¹ A. Gramsci: *Marxizmus, kultúra, művészet* (Marxism, culture, art), Budapest, 1965, pp. 111–112.

membership represent a sort of alternative government, a "back-up cast" which, should the party be voted into power, would become the "first cast". The term "shadow government" is an eloquent expression of this situation. Therefore, the "parallelism" between the political party and the various spheres of society is a sociological phenomenon and a necessary concomitant of the existence of political parties.

In the bourgeois-democratic countries the "second cast" of the bourgeois parties is small in strength. Owing to the specific features of the societies under the rule of private property, the changes in the sphere of politics barely affect the non-political posts (i.e. those in the sphere of economy, culture, mass media, etc.). The effect of a political change is usually not more than some changes in the higher state posts.

But it was necessary during the period of preparations for the Socialist Revolution and has remained so under socialism to train capable men to occupy if it is required responsible posts in nearly every sphere of the social life.

After the establishment of socialist government, a part of the cadres trained by the Party is appointed to responsible posts in the public administration, production, etc. Thus they directly participate in the daily exercise of power and administration of affairs. The other part of the Party's cadres—which has been increasing, thanks to the broadening training activity of the Party—works on in non-managerial posts in the Party machinery or elsewhere in the local Party organizations. The role of the latter is analogous with that described by A. Gramsci. Participation in the expert control of the given field, participation in the efforts to improve the quality of management and in the elaboration of new alternative forms and methods of management. With its competent methods of organization, the Party is in a position of calling this dormant army of well-trained cadres into play when it deems it appropriate. It can arrange the necessary changes in the responsible posts. In fact it can maintain a continuous and expert control over the leaders in general. Should a man in a responsible post commit a serious mistake, the above-described situation makes it easy to find a capable man to replace him. Thus the parallelism between the activity of the Party and other social leading bodies—a condition based on the Party's role of overall guidance on Lenin's principles—precludes all men in charge from regarding as their exclusive privilege to administer their domain.

This "parallelism", i.e., the Party's presence in all the leading bodies as well as its overall guidance of the life of the society have been realized

following the principles of Lenin. In light of this "dyarchy", there is no doubt that the Party is a specific counterpoise. On the one hand, it offers policies for adoption by the various government agencies and other bodies and, on the other, it carries out an expert control of how its guidelines are put into practice. In all its activities, the Party expertly asserts the will of the people and serves its interests. The Party also regards it as its task to rouse the rank and file to participate in the management of public affairs; to evaluate the state of affairs day by day; to organize the calling to account of the leaders who become unworthy of the workers' confidence; and to organize—if it is unavoidable—their replacement with competent men. It can be concluded that the overlap of the functions of the Party and the remaining organs; the Party's overall guidance, control and occasional interference are no obstruction to the proper functioning of socialist democracy and the independent operation of the democratic institutions. In fact it is a condition and safeguard of the proper assertion of democracy.

6.5.2. The Communist Party—A Model for Socialist and Democratic Self-Government

Being a vanguard, the Communist Party must be a model for socialist democracy. This idea is laid down in the Programme of the Twenty-second Congress of the CPSU. Being the vanguard of the people, the builder of communism, the Party must be consummate in organizing its own life. It must show an example to be followed in establishing the most perfect forms of communist social self-government.¹⁵² At the Tenth Congress of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, a similar opinion was voiced: In socialist society Party democracy assures the development of democracy in all public life. We must start out from this point when we set out to seek the ways of furthering socialist democracy. [...] The Party properly performs its duty provided its members display an exemplary activity and Party life is full of political-social vigour. It should be noted—however that the activity of the communists presupposes a full-grown democracy within the Party.¹⁵³

What is the significance of Party democracy, the free atmosphere

¹⁵² Protocol of the Twenty-second Congress of the CPSU (in Hungarian), p. 830.

¹⁵³ Protocol of the Tenth Congress of the HSWP (in Hungarian), p. 230.

within the Party, the scope for voicing the diverse opinions without restraints? In the first place, it ensures a *genuine equality* of the Party members: that the men in charge have the same rights and duties as the rank and file and the activity of both is evaluated in a principled Party spirit. Thus no one is allowed to seize a position of infallibility and untouchability, where one has rights but is free from the burden of duties.

Furthermore, Party democracy assures a *fruitful interplay of the leadership and membership, the true unity of the Party*, thereby enabling the Party to perform effective actions. In his work *History and Class Consciousness*, György Lukács writes that in non-Communist parties the membership falls into an active and a passive parts, and the latter comes into play only occasionally, under the order of the first. The rights and duties are unified only in the Marxist-Leninist parties. Only there is it a fundamental requirement that, in order to become a true communist, one has to take part actively in the daily work of the organization and the member's whole personality has to be absorbed in the practice of the movement. That has a twofold consequence: on the one hand, the individual can attain his own true freedom only in the Party. On the other hand, "since every decision of the party must result in actions by all the members of the party and every slogan leads to deeds by the individual members of party" they are not only well placed to offer criticism, they are forced to do so together with their experiences and their doubts... The active participation of all members in the daily life of the party... is the only means by which to compel the leadership to make their resolutions really comprehensible to the members and to convince members of their correctness. For where this is not done they cannot possibly be carried out satisfactorily... But also, even before action is taken and certainly during it, these dialogues must lead to precisely this living interaction between the will of the whole party and that of the Central Committee; they must correct and modify the actual transition from resolution to deed... The more deeply ingrained these tendencies become, the sooner the harsh unrelating contrast between leader and the masses, that has survived as a vestige of bourgeois party politics, will disappear".¹⁵⁴

The strengthening and continual development of Party democracy

¹⁵⁴ G. Lukács: *History and Class Consciousness*, Studies in Marxist Dialectics, The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1971, pp. 336—337.

feature high among the Leninist norms of leadership. Lenin has given a detailed explication of the relevant principles, and he strived to assert them through thick and thin.

In Lenin's view one of the important conditions of the Party's functioning as a vigorous, active and creative organ should be that its basic units be independently active. For this reason, he made it a standing demand for the higher Party organs to honour and encourage the independence of the lower Party organizations. He was convinced that a strong revolutionary party must rely on the firm basis of lower organizations which are one with the local masses, are familiar with the local circumstances and are, therefore, capable of pursuing an adequate local policy. Lenin denounced all uncalled-for interference from above in the life of the lower Party organizations for he regarded—and with good reason—such an interference as the curtailing of their independent activity and thereby their responsibility for the local policy. The consistency and accuracy with which he stuck to this theoretical stand can be eloquently illustrated by a writing of his, produced early in 1907, in the initial stage of Russian working-class movement, when he still lived in illegality: "The Rules of our Party very definitely establish the democratic organization of the Party. The whole organization is built from below upwards, on an elective basis... the local organizations are independent (autonomous) in their local activities... the Central Committee co-ordinates and directs all the work of the Party. Hence it is clear that it has no right to interfere in determining the *composition* of local organizations. Since the organization is built from below upwards, interference in its composition from above would be a flagrant breach of democracy and of the Party Rules."¹⁵⁵

In Lenin's opinion the other major condition for transforming the Party into a dynamic, creative and active democratic organization is the establishment of a new-type relation between the Party membership and organization: the Party members have to be roused to action, all their creative powers and energies must be called into play.

This requirement originates in the realization of the fact that the Party is an organization with a specific composition. It is never simply a cross-section of the society, the working classes and strata, and they are never represented in it proportionally. The Party cannot fulfil its mission unless it is made up by the best and most precious elements

¹⁵⁵ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 11, pp. 441—442.

of the working class, the working people who are the most advanced with respect to socialist consciousness and activity. It is a subjective condition of the success of the efforts to win the appreciation of the non-Party workers and to submit them to Party guidance. It is also a condition of the successful functioning of the Party: it must consist of people who are "wiser" and better trained than the average in order to be able to orient the people at large. On the strength of the very fact that it is a vanguard, i.e., it rallies the best elements of the working class, the working people, the Party is able to induce the workers to action. Relying on its members high level of theoretical preparedness, consciousness, readiness for self-sacrifice, and discipline, the Party appeal to the wide masses of workers and other working people.

The members of the Party are more conscious than the average people, take a bigger share from the service of the society, and have more than once proved their committedness to socialism. Therefore it can be said that the Party has a specific composition. For this very reason it has become possible to assure the Party members considerable leeway within the framework of the Party organization. They are given the opportunity to take an active part in the discussion, definition, fulfilment and control of the major social programmes. It is not only their interests, but that of the Party, the working people and the whole society.

The methods of rousing the Party membership to action are not confined to the enforcement of the requirements as laid down in the Party Rules. Lenin always strived to create such conditions under which the Party members' conscious activity, based on a high-level communist morality, may unfold. This means a free atmosphere in the Party, the assurance of room for the membership to voice their opinions and ideas, and scope for their initiative and independent action. Lenin attached major importance to this issue. For instance, in early 1910, when there was a bitter fight of factions within the Party, he wrote: "There cannot be the slightest doubt that there is no unanimity in the Party in regard to every detail...the Party press must open its door widely for their criticism and revision in accordance with the dictates of experience and the lessons of the increasingly complex economic and political struggle, that this work of criticism, application and improvement must henceforth be regarded by *all* factions, or more correctly all *trends*, in the Party as a matter of their own self-determination, as a matter of elucidating their own policy." At the same time, Lenin pointed out that there are definite conditions of the discussion within the Party: "But the work

of criticism and correction of the Party line must not prevent unity in Party *activity*, which cannot cease for single moment, which cannot waver, which must be guided in *everything* by the basic propositions of the above-mentioned resolutions."¹⁵⁶

After the Socialist Revolution, Lenin kept on struggling to maintain the Party as a live and creative organization, where there is room for the initiative and independent action of the lower organs and the membership. For instance, during the period of war communism he resolutely opposed to the snawballing instances of bureaucracy and the application of army methods: the ordering of Party members as soldiers; the spreading signs of centralism and the repression of the independent actions of lower Party organizations. The emergence of these phenomena is due in part to the need for the Party to operate not only as a disciplined and united organization but as a military organization, during the Civil War and the Foreign Intervention. Undoubtedly, those methods were instrumental in reaching the required results. On the other hand, the Party's military organization character helped these methods to take roots.

Lenin's efforts were aimed not only at eliminating these phenomena. He strived to solve problems of a greater magnitude as well. A victorious Party must always (not only during the civil war) be able to effectively guide and control the well-organized state, economic and military units. Ostensibly the simplest solution of this problem is to transform the Party into an organization resembling the machinery of a government, viz. a super-apparatus. Trotsky, for instance, was an ardent supporter of this concept. Another "solution" is the identification of the Party with its professional machinery. Ample instances of this practice could be seen in the period of personality cult. Such a structure of the Party, managing society seems to be justified by the fact that in the period after the socialist revolution, the Party's former cadres, the activists who were tested during the revolutionary struggle, are admitted to the Party machinery in great numbers, indeed, the entire pre-revolutionary membership may be drawn into the Party apparatus. For this reason the Party machinery may enjoy an exceptional esteem before the newly admitted Party members and the non-Party population. Thus the Party machinery may become a smoothly operating bureau where—owing to the application of "military methods"—the non-professional members

¹⁵⁶ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 16, pp. 149—150.

become merely incidental elements. Under such circumstances the Party machinery may consider itself "*the Party*".

Lenin and Central Committee of the Communist Party under his leadership formulated a totally different concept to be followed by the Party, the leading force of socialism. They considered the Party as an organization in which each member should have the right and the duty to act free from constraints, with full consciousness, with the free employment of his creative powers, collectively and purposefully. To achieve that goal, the Party must be the "clever gathering" of the competent working people able expertly and wisely to evaluate the state of affairs in every locality, work place as well as in the whole country. It must be able to work out the most effective guidelines, must be able to have its advice heeded, and to have the strength to put its plans into practice. On the strength of these very features, the Party may be able to sustain its leading role both intellectually and with the efficiency of its practical work.

The designers of this Party model demanded the repudiation of the other model, with a military and bureaucratic character. They wanted all the members of the Party to be equal, that they should have equal rights and duties. They required the unity of thought and action in a Party spirit.

Once the period was over in which the "militarization" of the Party organizations was somewhat justifiable, Lenin and the leading group of the CPSU under him strived to straighten the Party line: consistently assert and develop Party democracy, the intellectual activities within the Party and initiative at the grass roots.

The Resolution of the 1920 Ninth All-Russia Conference of the Party was the first document in which a stand was taken in favour of broadening Party democracy. The framers of the Party Resolution called on all the higher Party bodies and officials regularly to give an account of the work they had done for the lower bodies and the entire Party membership, thereby enabling the members to supervise and control the leaders. It is laid down in the Resolution that the motives of the diverse decisions brought by the Central Committee and the other central organs have to be made public in the lower level Party meetings. Efforts have to be made to draw the rank-and-file Party members in the daily activity of the Party. For this reason—unless the issues at the agenda necessitate a closed session—not only the *gubernia* Party conferences but the plenary sessions of the local and *gubernia* Party committees must be rendered

open for all Party members, the Resolution says. It called for the bringing of the necessary measures to realize that goal. In another move aimed at widening Party democracy, the authors of the Resolution urged a stronger intra-organization criticism of both the lower and higher Party units. The Central Committee is requested to draft a circular to elucidate the ways and means of that. It was also resolved at the Party Conference to set up press organs in which the mistakes of the Party can be regularly exposed, and polemic periodicals for criticism within the Party in general. The Conference ordered the launching of a polemic supplement to the gazette "Central Committee Communiqués". It called for the creation of similar supplements also to the "Gubernia Party Committee Communiqués".¹⁵⁷

The open and frank atmosphere within the Party, the analysis of the Party's experiences and, within that, the principled criticism and self-criticism of the Communists, are part and parcel of the development of Party democracy. As Lenin wrote at that time: "A political party's attitude towards its own mistakes is one of the most important and surest ways of judging how earnest the party is and how it fulfils *in practice* its obligations towards its *class* and the *working people*. Frankly acknowledging a mistake, ascertaining the reason for it, analysing the conditions that have led up to it, and thrashing out the means of its rectification—that is the hallmark of a serious party; that is how it should perform its duties, and how it should educate and train its *class* and then the *masses*."¹⁵⁸ Lenin opposed those who attempted to obstruct the exposure of mistakes within the Party on the grounds that the enemy might take advantage of that. Addressing the Third Congress of Comintern, he declared: "We must not conceal our mistakes from the enemy. Anyone who is afraid of this is no revolutionary. On the contrary, if we openly declare to the workers: 'Yes, we have made mistakes', it will mean that they will not be repeated."¹⁵⁹ At the joint session of the attending German communists and the members of the Central Committee of the Party, Lenin reminded the delegates that, on many occasions, criticism of the conditions within the Party and that of the comrades at fault had often resulted in a critical situation within the RCP(B). The Mensheviks attacked us for that, Lenin said. But they were given

¹⁵⁷ Resolutions of the CPSU (in Hungarian), Vol. 1, p. 589, p. 590 and p. 592.

¹⁵⁸ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 31, p. 57.

¹⁵⁹ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 32, p. 477.

the following answer: Our honourable enemies, you may find it an appropriate occasion for rejoicing. Yet the Party must at all times maintain discipline and must be never afraid of exposing the shortcomings. We might get in serious danger if we are silent on our shortcomings.¹⁶⁰

This tenet of Lenin applies in the first place to the Communist Parties in power. As it can be seen in the ensuing passage, it has been espoused also by one of the leading bodies of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party.

It is laid down in the document that it does not serve the defence of the Party's interests if the mistakes of individual members, officials or units are covered up or hushed up. Instead, the right and correct stand, reality and the facts have to be adhered to irrespective of the persons at fault.

Lenin attached especial importance to the following features of Party democracy: all members—including those in leading bodies—should have a personal, i.e., in part specific, approach to the problems.

(Of course, their approach must be based on a communist conviction.) Only in that way may the ensuing theoretical debate result in an ideological synthesis and decision that takes into consideration every viewpoint. Lenin considered this an inalienable right of the Party members. Even during the dramatic days of the Seventh Congress of the Party, when decision had to be made on the Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty and the Party was threatened by a split, Lenin confined himself to calling on the members of the Central Committee to adopt a unified line, than he added: "This does not mean that all those in the Central Committee should be of one and the same opinion. To hold that view would be to go towards a split." Lenin was of the opinion that each member of the Central Committee had the right to voice his disagreement—representing, of course, the opinion of the local organizations which had delegated him. This should not automatically make him unworthy of the Central Committee membership and result in his expulsion. Neither should this mean resignation from the Central Committee membership as a logical consequence of his dissenting opinion.¹⁶¹ Lenin went even further in the Ninth Congress of the RCP(B). He proposed to augment the trade union representation in the Central Committee of the Party with those whose opinion was in variance with the official trade union line favouring

¹⁶⁰ Leninist Reader, Vol. 37, p. 304.

¹⁶¹ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 27, pp. 149—150.

a stricter discipline, one-man management, and a more widespread and resolute application of administrative measures. As Lenin put it: "If the representation of the trade unions on the Central Committee is to be increased, it would be useful to have on it representatives of this trend too—though it may be wrong on certain points, it is at least original and has a definite shade of opinion of its own—side by side with the extremist champions of corporate management who are battling in the name of democracy but who are mistaken. Let them both be represented on the Central Committee. . . . We . . . need . . . such a form of organization of the Central Committee, as would enable it to know every shade of opinion, not only among the 600,000 Party members, but also among the 3,000,000 trade union members, so that it may be able at any moment to lead them all as one man!"¹⁶² During the debate on trade unions Lenin stressed that Tomski, the trade union leader on the Central Committee, must always express the concerns of the masses. This is a merit, even if this is not done on the required level of consciousness.¹⁶³

The liberty to speak out within the Party was so dear for Lenin for he saw it as a means to enable the Party, the organization of the working class, to even more perfectly discharge its functions of gathering and evaluating information, revealing the problems, assessing the experiments and criticizing the mistakes. The Communist Party is an open system of information. In more concrete terms, this means the following: the Party gathers as many pieces of information about its own life and the outside world as it is possible. It processes them in the most sophisticated way. Finally, in the form of a feedback, it realizes its goals and thus makes a practical use of the information. The Party cannot discharge this function successfully unless the whole membership lends its assistance to it, unless every Party member feels it as his duty to report on the opinions and sentiments of the masses. The varied accounts offer a complex description of reality. Naturally, the individual reports are influenced by the specific environs of the given Party member and the opinions of the masses surrounding him. Therefore, individual reports may be not exhaustive enough or they may be one-sided. It does not follow, however, that they are worthless and should be ignored. The truth and real value of such a report—for reflecting reality—may be evaluated only at the theoretical debate and by the whole of the given Party

¹⁶² V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 30, pp. 478—479.

¹⁶³ Cf. V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 32, p. 26.

collective. The possible distortions of such a subjective representation of reality can be rectified only by the plenary session of the given Party organization. If, however, the Party does not allow the liberty of the expression of opinions and of the debates, the experience will not be available for all the members.

That would mean the weakening of the Party's information retrieval system. That would also mean that the pieces of information and experiences gathered would not be submitted to the collective forums of discussion and as a result would not be freed from their subjective character. That, in turn, could result in the spread and ingraining of various mistaken ideas within the Party.

The free atmosphere within the Party also helps it better discharge its practical leading functions. On the one hand, it is possible to reveal all the possible alternatives at the discussions of the collective. This is instrumental in the search for the optimum decisions. On the other hand, a free discussion offers an excellent opportunity to convince each member of the expediency and necessity of a given mode of action. That in turn may enable every communist to become one with the Party's activities, to fulfil his duties with utmost devotion.

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Bourgeois Sovietologists, social-democrats, revisionists, anarchists and the other opponents of the Marxist socialism regard the Tenth Congress of the Party and the coinciding suppression of the Kronstadt uprising as a turning-point in the history of the communist movement. They allege that the year 1921 marked the end democracy within the Communist Party and the state. They claim that from that time on the debates were abolished, the political influence of the Party rank and file eliminated and the oligarchic dominion of the apparatus, the higher Party leadership was begun.¹⁶⁴

The historical facts have categorically disproved these allegations. True, the Tenth Party Congress—like the previous Congresses—took a resolute stand against the attempts at splitting the Party, against all kinds of factionalism. It is also an undeniable fact that in the years of

¹⁶⁴ See, for instance, the collection of documents, entitled *Arbeiterdemokratie oder Parteidiktatur*, Herausgegeben von Fritz Kool und Ervin Oberlander, Walter Verlag, Freiburg, 1967; Walter Theimer: *Der Marxismus, Lehre-Wirkung-Kritik*, A. Francke Verlag, Bern; Gabriel Cohn-Bendit and Daniel Cohn-Bendit: *Le Gauchisme—remède à la maladie senile du Communisme*, Paris, 1969.

personality cult, *first of all* these planks were given prominence, thereby justifying the curtailing of democracy within the Party.

But, as a matter of fact, the Congress which denounced and banned factionalism made *further steps* to broaden democracy within the Party, to promote free discussion and criticism, and to achieve united action based on the conscious and voluntary discipline of the membership. Lenin made it clear during the Congress: "Everyone has the right to straighten out the Party's line." The struggle against factionalism must not hinder free criticism within the Party. That is however useful only in a definite mode and with the due consideration of the given circumstances. "Criticism of the Party's shortcomings, which is absolutely necessary, must be conducted in such a way that every practical proposal shall be submitted immediately, without any delay, in the most precise form possible, for consideration and decision to the leading and central bodies of the Party." Lenin added: "Moreover, every critic must see to it that the form of his criticism takes account of the position of the Party, . . . and that the content of his criticism is such that, by directly participating in Soviet and Party work, he can test the rectification of the errors of the Party or of individual Party members in practice." Lenin emphasized that the analysis of the Party line, the control of its fulfilment, and criticism must not be submitted for debate to a group, set up on the basis of some "platform". They must be immediately made public for all the members of the Party. Therefore Lenin made a proposition (which was adopted by the Congress) of issuing the polemic supplement to the official Party organ more often, and to publish surveys of diverse opinions on a given subject. Lenin stressed the great difference between the rallying behind certain political platforms and the submittal of certain theoretical issues to a broad discussion. He described the first as factionalism, which had to be held back. On the other hand, he stressed that scientific research, including that aimed at assessing and—if necessary—improving the Party's programme, had to be encouraged with all means.¹⁶⁵

It was precisely the Tenth Congress of the Party which denounced most resolutely the practice of the militarization of the Party organizations. It is laid down in the Resolution of the Congress that all the major problems of the daily Party life and the political and other questions of the given place have to be regularly submitted to the plenary session

¹⁶⁵ ssee e.g. Lenin Collected Works. Vol. 32. p. 207, 253, 265—263 (In Hunga an

of the given Party organization in order to develop workers' democracy and render the Party life livelier. The Resolution also calls on the higher bodies of the Party to hold open meetings. The framers of the agenda of such a public meeting must see to it that the questions raised shall be the most useful for the attending Party rank and file. The leading bodies of the Party must work under the constant inspection of the Party general public. The leading bodies and the Party as a whole must work in a continuous and practical cooperation. The individual Party committees must give an account of their activity to not only the bodies above, but also to those below them. In case a Party organization is considerably populous, this latter process must also include the membership meeting of the given Party organizations, as well.¹⁶⁶

It is clear from these decisions that the major conditions of Party democracy for the Party and Lenin were as follows: a free atmosphere within the Party, equality within the Party, and the control of the Party membership over the leading bodies which it voted into power.

The following episode eloquently illustrates how important it was to assert Party democracy and to honour the will of the Party members. The Petrograd Party organization was headed by G. E. Zinoviev. In autumn 1921 a group of Party members was about to gain ascendancy within the organization which he did not like. Invoking the anti-factionalism clause of the Resolution of the Tenth Party Congress, Zinoviev braced to do away with the group. The Central Committee sent out a three-member committee of inquiry to probe the allegation of factionalism. The panel consisted of Lenin, Stalin and Molotov. Upon concluding the inquiry and speaking in the name of the committee, Lenin turned down the charge as unfounded. We have not found any political deviation whatsoever in Piter (Piter is the popular name of the city of Petrograd), Lenin wrote, not even a deviation for deviation. The majority may exercise its legal right of being a majority and replacing the group through which Zinoviev guided the activities at variance with the will of the majority. The membership is mature, which is one of the reasons why this wish of theirs is legal. It is undesirable to employ the theoretical controversy for leading them to deviation. *Ideological* guidance must be carefully carried out, *fully* enabling the majority to become a majority and to *lead*.¹⁶⁷ The three politicians took a similar stand when N. Osinsky,

¹⁶⁶ Resolutions of the CPSU (in Hungarian), Vol. 1, pp. 607—608.

¹⁶⁷ (V. I. Lenin) Ленин В. И.: Сочинения Vol. 45, p. 25.

the Deputy People's Commissar for Agriculture, charged his colleagues, who were at variance with him on some points, with plotting a factional intrigue. It is unwise to cry "intrigue" or "opposition" when we encounter people thinking or acting not the way we do. Original men should be esteemed, Lenin wrote at that time.¹⁶⁸

The Resolution of the Thirteenth Party Congress, held in 1924, concentrates on the development of workers' democracy. Workers' democracy means—the document says—that each member of the Party has the right to discuss the major problems of Party life freely and openly. At the same time, the workers' democracy does not at all mean the freedom of setting up factional groups. The Party cannot sustain itself in the form it functioned during the Revolution unless it encourages a lively intellectual life among its ranks, unless it examines, its past with critical eyes, rectifies its own mistakes and submits the major problems to joint discussions. That is the only way in which the episodic controversies can be prevented from becoming factional groupings. The leading Party organs must heed the voice of the broad mass of membership. They should not regard each instance of criticism as a factional act, lest they drive conscientious and disciplined Party members on the road of isolationism and factionalism. In no way should the Party be regarded as a regimented bureau or authority, neither should it be seen as a club for the discussion of the most diverse trends, the Resolution says.¹⁶⁹

It will be recalled that these norms of Party leadership were observed for a certain period after Lenin's death. The second half of the 1920s was witnessing several Party-wide discussions in which the problems of socialist construction were debated and clarified, openly. At its Fifteenth Congress in 1927, the CPSU proclaimed the slogan of criticism and self-criticism, which was confirmed and further elaborated in the 1930 Sixteenth Congress. Thus the problems were frankly raised, discussed and collectively resolved both in the Party and the society as a whole.

However this situation was reversed with the rise of the personality cult. This mistaken and harmful principle of management brought about numerous consequences. Obstacles were thrown in the way of Party democracy, the open discussion, the sincere and comradely atmosphere, communist criticism irrespective of persons and posts, and the initiatives of the communists.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid. pp. 339—400.

¹⁶⁹ Resolutions of the CPSU, Vol. 1, pp. 902—903.

The elimination of the personality cult and its consequences has given a mighty impetus to the efforts to restore and assert the Leninist norms of the building of the Party. Naturally, we have not seen the end of that process. That is why a thorough knowledge of the Leninist principles and motives of Party democracy may hasten this process.

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The Party cannot be the leading force of socialist society unless it cultivates close links with the working masses. As Lenin put it: "In the sea of people we are after all but a drop in the ocean, and we can administer only when we express correctly what the people are conscious of. Unless we do this the Communist Party will not lead the proletariat, the proletariat will not lead the masses, and the whole machine will collapse."¹⁷⁰ In his draft for the theses on the role and task of trade unions, Lenin defined the requirements of cultivating the relations with the masses as follows: To live amidst the *masses*. To know their *sentiments*. To know them *in and out*. To understand the mass. To know how make approaches to them. To win their *absolute* confidence. The leaders must not lose contact with the mass under their direction; the vanguard must not lose contact with the entire army of labour. It is necessary to know how to combine persuasion with compulsion. Never to flatter the mass, neither to lose contact with them.¹⁷¹

Hence it follows that the Party's untiring efforts to let the workers accept it as its leading force is part and parcel of the good relations between the Party and the mass.

The other major condition the Party must fulfil to maintain the good relations is such an activity on the part of the Party which attracts a *voluntary* and *all-embracing* support of the masses. To achieve that goal, *the Party, being the leading force of socialism, has to be able to cultivate exemplary relations with the working people.*

The Party is the collective leading force of the masses. Therefore it is not exempt from the rule which applies to all the leaders and leading bodies in socialist society: the leaders are *the delegates of the people and are accountable to the people for their activity*. For this reason their activity must have an open character to enable the people to control and evaluate it. The leaders must create such a social atmosphere in

¹⁷⁰ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 33, p. 304.

¹⁷¹ Ленинский Сборник, Vol. 36, p. 389.

which the workers are armed with institutional and other means for objectively evaluating their performance.

Naturally, the assertion of this requirement is rather difficult in the case, when only one party exists, for the general political guidance of society does not yield to objective assessment so readily as, for instance, the day-to-day management in a production unit.

Lenin was aware of this difficulty. Yet he spared no effort to find the ways and means of how the working masses could control the performance of the Party, this specific collective leading body. Lenin opined that it was the duty of the Party to encourage the people to exercise its right of control. He held that if followed from the leading position of the Party that it had to enable those under its direction to control its activity. For this reason, Lenin strived to make the Party's activities as open as possible. His aim was to enable each and all to see the Party's share and responsibility in defining and implementing the guidelines of action of individual villages, towns or the whole country. It was Lenin's desire to preserve the Party as a political party of the masses, which maintains close links with them, is near to them, and is one with them. He struggled against the Party's relegation to not more than being a "super bureau" which is the arbiter of the various agencies (though he knew that that role was also indispensable"). Instead, he wanted the Party to maintain close links with the masses and to be directly accessible to them.¹⁷²

¹⁷² Lenin held it essential to establish close links between the Party and the non-Party workers. He relied on the non-Party workers even in the solution of the Party's internal problems. In one of his articles, published in *Pravda* in September 1921, he urged the Party to listen to the non-Party workers' opinion at issues like the purge of the Party and the admission of new members. As he put it: "In some places the Party is being purged mainly with the aid of the experience and suggestions of non-Party workers; these suggestions and the representatives of the non-Party proletarian masses are being heeded with due consideration. That is the most valuable and most important thing. Naturally, we shall not submit to every thing the masses say because the masses, too, sometimes... yield to sentiments that are in no way advanced. But in appraising persons, in the negative attitude to those who have 'attached' themselves to us for selfish motives, to those who have become 'puffed-up commissars', and 'bureaucrats', the suggestions of the non-Party proletarian masses and, in many cases, of the non-Party peasant masses, are extremely valuable. The working masses have a fine intuitions, which enables them to distinguish honest and devoted Communists from those who arouse disgust of people earning their bread by the sweat of their brow, enjoying no privileges and having no 'pull'." (V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 33, pp. 39—40).

Furthermore, Lenin and the Central Committee of the Party under his direction considered the control of the work of the Party members by non-Party people important.¹⁷³ For this reason the communist officers were obliged regularly to give account of their work done to the non-Party working and labouring masses.¹⁷⁴ Speaking of the results the Party had scored in the administration of the country, in the early 1920s Lenin reiterated the obligation of the Party to rely on the trade unions and the conferences of the non-Party workers and peasants. They evaluated the policy of the Party, helped it make the necessary corrections, and promoted its realization.¹⁷⁵

Under the present circumstances the socialist countries have several standing or occasional bodies whose functions correspond with those of the above-mentioned conferences. They include the people's front movements and the other political parties (in some of the socialist countries) as well as various non-Party conferences and consultations of activists where, as a rule, non-Party citizens account for the majority. As it is widely known, the conferences of such meetings use these forums actively to voice their views on major issues of socialist society, and to evaluate and influence the policy of the Party and the implementation of the Party's targets.

Lenin and the Soviet Communist Party were convinced that the popular support was the truest indicator of the successful work of the Party. Their ideal was to have the broad working masses themselves to control the Party's activity and see its achievements and then to give a positive evaluation of the Party's performance. As Lenin put it in 1922: "We need to take the right direction, we need to see that everything is checked, that the masses, the entire population check the path we follow and say: 'Yes, this is better than the old system!' We must remake things in such a way that the great majority of the masses, the peasants and workers, will say: 'It is not you who praise yourselves, but we. We say that you have splendid results, after which no intelligent person will ever dream of returning to the old'."¹⁷⁶ A similar idea was expressed by Comrade János Kádár at the Eighth Congress of the Hungarian Socialist Workers'

¹⁷³ Cf. V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 32, p. 509; furthermore, the open letter of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist (Bolshevik) Party on the relations between the Party and the non-Party people. *Pravda*, May 7, 1921.

¹⁷⁴ Cf. V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 32, p. 63. and pp. 126—128.

¹⁷⁵ Cf. V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 30, pp. 187—188; Vol. 32, pp. 429—431.

¹⁷⁶ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 33, p. 442.

Party: "For five or six years, now, the party has always acknowledged the work of the non-party people, or always given them credit, when they deserved it. This has resulted in an increased public appreciation of the communists over the past six years. In the past it was also better, if we were praised by members of other parties than if we were praised by ourselves. It is up to the communists to praise the non-party people, and then the non-party people will praise the communists."¹⁷⁷

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The Marxist-Leninist Party's leading role in socialist society, the exemplary democratic life within the Party results in the fact that it may become a model of communist self-government, and that the Party may be an example for the ideal relations of the leaders and the governed: these features constitute one of the most important elements of socialist democracy.

¹⁷⁷ J. Kádár: *On the Road to Socialism, Selected Speeches and Interviews, 1960—1964*, Budapest, 1965, p. 124.

Conclusion

We have often quoted in this work the views on democracy of Marx, Engels and Lenin. We have also referred to their efforts to put their ideas into practice. Our guiding principle was only in part that scientific requirement according to which the Marxist-Leninist interpretation of democracy can only be presented by quoting the relevant authentic Marxist thoughts. Neither did we invoke these tenets simply to draw attention to the thus far not sufficiently explored rich theoretical heritage of the classics of Marxism. Our study is therefore not simply a historical survey of these theorists' and politicians' views on democracy. Quoting from the works on democracy of classics of Marxism-Leninism we wanted, in the first place, to serve practical purposes: the furtherance of socialist democracy. Socialist democracy can be successfully developed only if socialist forces do not confine themselves to the fulfilment of the various provisions which meet only ephemeral needs. In addition, they need a theoretically coherent system. The views on democracy and the political practice of the classics of Marxism offer such a coherent theoretical system: a theory of democracy, which can serve as a guide of practical action. On the one hand, it has been the very purpose of this work to prove, the actuality of the relevant teachings of Marx, Engels and Lenin in the present practical-political activities. On the other hand, we aimed at substantiating the necessity of developing socialist democracy in the wake of their ideas.

Owing to the specific course of history, socialism has gained ground in relatively underdeveloped countries threatened by world imperialism as well as the potential threat of the restoration of capitalism. Due to the resultant strained pace of socialist transformation, the world communist movement has been forced to follow a constrained course of development in order to defend the socialist system, and has had to restrict democracy, instead of strictly realizing the Marxist-Leninist programme of democracy in detail. The peoples of the advanced socialist countries have had to wait until the recent years to enjoy a measure of security. By now the economic basis of these countries has become firm, and the preponderant majority of the population is loyal, in fact, devoted to the cause of socialism. This means that the system has become able to develop upon a basis called into existence almost exclusively by itself. Thus it has become

possible for these countries to set out for the completion of the Marxist-Leninist programme of democracy from that higher level of development which was assumed by the classics of Marxism-Leninism. Now these countries are capable of reaching those levels of development which—owing to the specific historical circumstances—the communist movement has failed to approach.

It is not an easy task to go on with the realization of the Marxist-Leninist programme of democracy today. One of the reasons is that the recent decades have seen the emergence and consolidation of several institutional methods, habits and ways of thinking which tend to restrict the democratism of the socialist democracy. At the time of their emergence, most of them were necessitated by objective circumstances. And past experiences have proved their authenticity and effectiveness. Yet in the current phase of development the scope for the activity of the working masses as ensured by many of the conventional forms of government has become narrower than desirable. Therefore they have to be gradually replaced by other institutions, policies and attitudes. Only through an objective analysis of social reality, based on the Marxist-Leninist principles, is it possible to establish the measure of the obsolescence of the forms of government, and to determine how to substitute them. This analysis must be followed by the practical criticism and dialectical negation of the obsolete phenomena. We must resort to an unrelenting criticism of the obsolete forms so as to avoid the tensions, contradictions, or even conflicts which may be provoked by their survival. That is why Lenin stressed that criticism is the duty of the revolutionary. And that “the proletariat must not fear truth, it must face it squarely and draw all necessary conclusions.”¹ It can be concluded therefore that the implementation of the Marxist-Leninist programme of democracy is not simple because, on the one hand, it entails the critical transcendence of some of the forms and policies of the present form of exercising power.

On the other hand, it entails the reappraisal of reality: of the new circumstances which have rendered the *literal* realization of the programme of Marx, Engels and Lenin in all its detail an impracticable task.

For instance, with social life having become more complex, the chances for switching over to “direct democracy” are smaller now than Marx and Lenin would have thought. They were convinced that it would be enough to overcome illiteracy and then everybody could be drawn in

¹ V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*. Vol. 28, p. 468.

the administration of public affairs. It is clear now that, for a long time to come, we shall need a professional apparatus for public administration. It is increasingly difficult to allow everybody to participate in public administration by way of a rotation of office. On the other hand, the advances in managerial and administrative sciences have made it possible keep pace with the latest social changes and possibilities. As a result, decision-making may approach the optimum to a greater extent. Thanks to this development, nearly each adult member of the community may take part in decision-making, which in turn results in the broadening of democracy. The exploration, assessment and integration of the dictates of the new historical circumstances also require creative theoretical and practical activity.

It is clear therefore that the slogan: "return to Marx and Lenin" is not the manifestation of a fossilized orthodoxy. It does not at all urge the conscious socialist forces to incessantly cite the words of these great leaders or to attempt to implement their programmes without alteration. (True, we saw such instances in the past.) As a matter of fact, this slogan obliges these forces concretely to analyse the conditions which these great theorists did not see, did not know, and to seek, test and realize solutions which are in harmony with the new developments. The views and practice of Marx and Lenin serve as a point of departure, and a theoretical guide for this activity. They serve as examples for theoretical and practical work.

We know what we want and shall therefore triumph, said Lenin in 1921. The reverse is also true: we cannot triumph unless we know what we want. Time presses us. Socialism would be more advanced, had its development not been impaired by specific historical circumstances. The two most important basic conditions for eliminating the historical lag of socialism imposed on it by specific circumstances and for developing a socialist democracy meeting the requirements set by the circumstances of our age are to make active use of the Marxist-Leninist heritage of ideas on democracy in accordance with today's circumstances and to elaborate new democratic forms and procedures suiting the new historical situation.

The ideas of Marx, Engels and Lenin on the development of socialist democracy are good not only in theory. Communist Parties in power in several countries have been striving to realize them. It is stressed, for instance, in the Resolution of the Twenty-fourth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party that the struggle for the building of communism is

inseparable from the complex development of socialist democracy, the strengthening of the Soviet state, and the improvement of the entire political organization of the society.² The same idea is emphasized in the Resolutions of the Eighth, Ninth and Tenth Congresses of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party.

The purpose of our theory is to guide us in our revolutionary activity, said Lenin in 1920 in a conversation with William Paul. Our views can be tested the best by the achievements in our struggle. "The real test of a communist is whether he knows where and how to put his Marxism into practice,"³ Lenin added. It depends on us to successfully stand this test.

² *The Twenty-fourth Congress of the CPSU (in Hungarian)*, Budapest, 1971, p. 336.

³ *Leninist Reader (In Russian)*, Vol. 37, p. 249.